MARVEL

"All Avengers fans need to be along for this ride."

– *Comicosity.com*

AVENGERS

BY JONATHAN HICKMAN

LARROCA · BIANCHI · YU · MORALES · SCHITI · WALKER · CASELLI · DEODATO

AVENGERS
BY JONATHAN HICKMAN

WRITER: JONATHAN HICKMAN

AVENGERS #24-28

ARTISTS: SALVADOR LARROCA WITH ESAD RIBIĆ (#24) AND MIKE DEODATO JR. (#24) & BUTCH GUICE (#24)

COLOR ARTISTS: FRANK MARTIN WITH DEAN WHITE (#24) AND PAUL MOUNTS (#24) & LAURA MARTIN (#24)

LETTERER: VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER ART: ESAD RIBIĆ (#24), MIKE DEODATO JR. & FRANK MARTIN (#25-27) AND AGUSTIN ALESSIO (#28)

NEW AVENGERS #13-15

ARTIST: SIMONE BIANCHI

INKS & INK WASH: SIMONE BIANCHI & RICCARDO PIERUCCINI

COLOR ARTIST: ADRIANO DELL'ALPI

LETTERER: VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA

COVER ART: GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

AVENGERS #29-34

PENCILER: LEINIL FRANCIS YU

INKER: GERRY ALANGUILAN

COLOR ARTISTS: SUNNY GHO WITH MATT MILLA (#34)

LETTERERS: VC'S CORY PETIT (#29-34) & CLAYTON COWLES (#32)

COVER ART: FRANK CHO & JASON KEITH (#29) AND LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO (#30-34)

NEW AVENGERS #16-17

ARTIST: RAGS MORALES

COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN

LETTERER: VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA

COVER ART: MIKE DEODATO JR. & FRANK MARTIN (#16) AND LEINIL FRANCIS YU & DAVID CURIEL (#17)

NEW AVENGERS #18-21

ARTISTS: VALERIO SCHITI WITH SALVADOR LARROCA (#21)

COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN WITH PAUL MOUNTS (#20-21)

LETTERER: VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER ART: DUSTIN WEAVER & JASON KEITH

NEW AVENGERS #22-23

ARTIST: KEV WALKER

COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN

LETTERER: VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA

COVER ART: DALE KEOWN & JASON KEITH (#22) AND CHRISTIAN WARD (#23)

AVENGERS #35

PENCILERS: JIM CHEUNG, PACO MEDINA, NICK BRADSHAW & DUSTIN WEAVER

INKERS: MARK MORALES, GUILLERMO ORTEGO, JUAN VLASCO, NICK BRADSHAW & DUSTIN WEAVER

COLOR ARTISTS: FRANK MARTIN & DAVID CURIEL

LETTERER: VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER ART: JIM CHEUNG & JUSTIN PONSOR

NEW AVENGERS #24

ARTIST: VALERIO SCHITI

COLOR ARTISTS: FRANK MARTIN & DAVID CURIEL

LETTERER: VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA

COVER ART: GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

AVENGERS #36

ARTIST: STEFANO CASELLI

COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN

LETTERER: VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER ART: STUART IMMONEN, WADE VON GRAWBADGER & MARTE GRACIA

NEW AVENGERS #25

ARTIST: KEV WALKER

COLOR ARTISTS: FRANK MARTIN & DAVID CURIEL

LETTERER: VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA

COVER ART: BUTCH GUICE & MATTHEW WILSON

AVENGERS #37

ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO JR.

COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN

LETTERER: VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER ART: JAMIE McKELVIE

NEW AVENGERS #26

ARTIST: KEV WALKER
INK ASSIST: SCOTT HANNA
COLOR ARTISTS: FRANK MARTIN & DONO SÁNCHEZ-ALMARA
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: SALVADOR LARROCA & PAUL MOUNTS

AVENGERS #38

ARTIST: STEFANO CASELLI
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: SIMONE BIANCHI

NEW AVENGERS #27

ARTIST: SZYMON KUDRANSKI
COLOR ARTIST: DONO SÁNCHEZ-ALMARA
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: SALVADOR LARROCA & PAUL MOUNTS

AVENGERS #39

ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO JR.
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: ALAN DAVIS, MARK FARMER & BRAD ANDERSON

NEW AVENGERS #28

ARTISTS: MIKE DEODATO JR. & MIKE PERKINS
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: ALAN DAVIS, MARK FARMER & BRAD ANDERSON

AVENGERS #40

ARTIST: STEFANO CASELLI
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: DALE KEOWN & JASON KEITH

NEW AVENGERS #29

PENCILER: KEV WALKER
INKERS: KEV WALKER & SCOTT HANNA
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

AVENGERS #41

ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO JR.
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: BRYAN HITCH & PAUL MOUNTS

NEW AVENGERS #30

PENCILER: DALIBOR TALAJIĆ
INKER: RICK MAGYAR
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: ALAN DAVIS, MARK FARMER & MATTHEW WILSON

AVENGERS #42

ARTIST: STEFANO CASELLI
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: SCOTT KOBLISH & ROMULO FAJARDO JR.

NEW AVENGERS #31

ARTIST: KEV WALKER
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: INHYUK LEE

NEW AVENGERS #32

ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO JR.
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: ADAM KUBERT & FRANK MARTIN

NEW AVENGERS #33

ARTIST: MIKE DEODATO JR.
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
COVER ART: GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

AVENGERS #43

ARTIST: MIKE MAYHEW
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: STEFANO CASELLI & SUNDER RAJ

AVENGERS #44

ARTISTS: STEFANO CASELLI & KEV WALKER
COLOR ARTIST: FRANK MARTIN
LETTERER: VC's CORY PETIT
COVER ART: DUSTIN WEAVER & JUSTIN PONSOR

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"ROGUE PLANET"

PREVIOUSLY IN AVENGERS

THE BEST IDEAS ARE ALWAYS THE SIMPLEST, AND WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW THINGS KEEP ESCALATING...

...HOW THE WORLD IS EVER MORE DANGEROUS, HOW THREATS ARE MORE FREQUENT... HOW OUR ENEMIES ARE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS...

"WELL, STEVE, THAT'S A COMPLEX PROBLEM, BUT YOU HAD A PRETTY SIMPLE ANSWER. YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID?"

I DO.

WELL, NOW I'M SURE YOU WERE RIGHT.

WE HAVE TO GET *BIGGER.*

ON AN ALTERNATE EARTH, AN EVENT OCCURRED THAT CAUSED THE EARLY DEATH OF A UNIVERSE. THIS CAUSED A TINY CONTRACTION, SMASHING TWO UNIVERSES TOGETHER AT THE INCURSION POINT OF THE INITIAL EVENT.

EACH INCURSION POINT LASTS EIGHT HOURS, AFTER WHICH EITHER BOTH WORLDS ARE DESTROYED OR ONLY ONE EARTH IS SACRIFICED, SPARING BOTH UNIVERSES.

YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD A MACHINE OR SOME KIND OF WEAPON WITHOUT THINKING IF YOU SHOULD... JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT NEED IT. THEN SLOWLY, OVER TIME, YOU'LL CONVINCE YOURSELVES. I WON'T ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN.

DAMMIT, CAP. WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE THIS WAY? DO IT, STEPHEN.

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN...WE HAVE NO CHOICE. YOU WERE NEVER HERE. YOU WILL REMEMBER NONE OF THIS.

AVENGERS

CAPTAIN AMERICA

IRON MAN

HULK

HAWKEYE

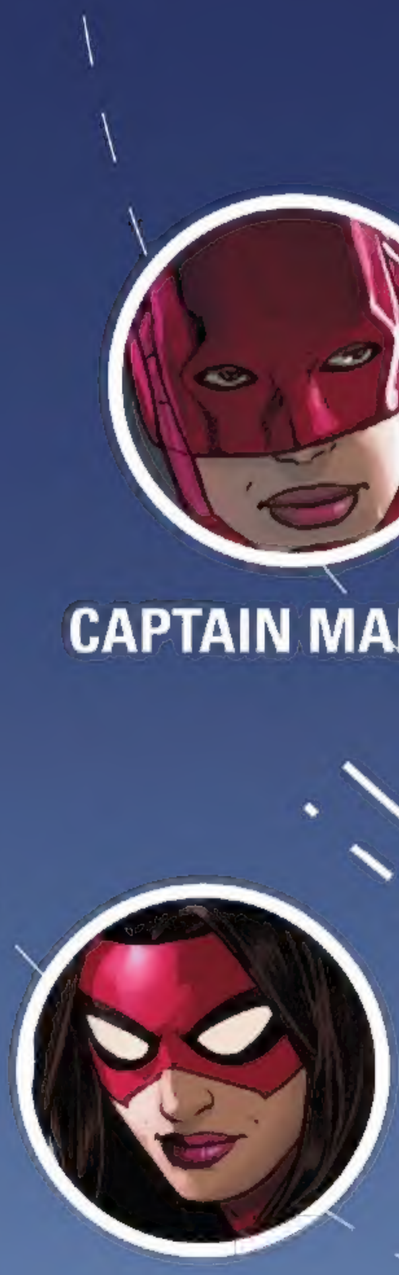
FALCON

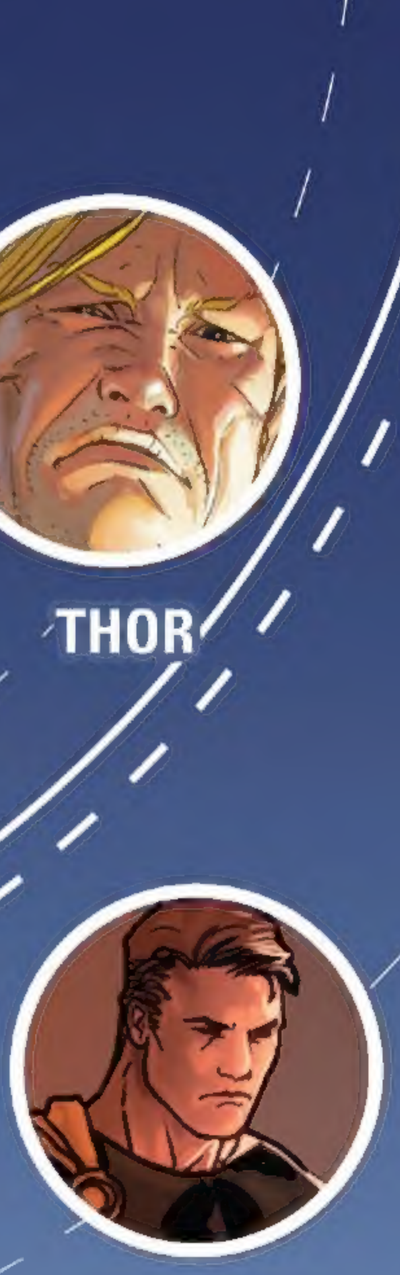
CAPTAIN MARVEL

BLACK WIDOW

MANIFOLD

THOR


SPIDER-WOMAN


HYPERION

SMASHER

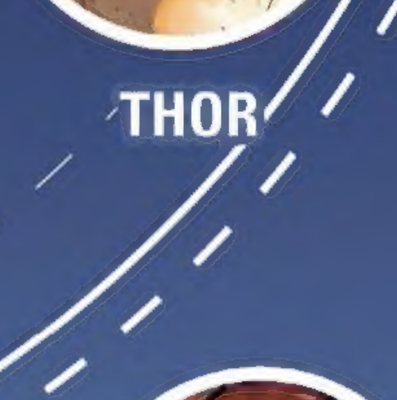
NIGHTMASK

CAPTAIN UNIVERSE

CANNONBALL

SUNSPOT

STARBRAND


SHANG-CHI

THE BAXTER BUILDINGS.
3030 AD.

STARK EXPERIMENTAL.
(A RICHARDS INDUSTRIES SUBSIDIARY).

POWERING ON...

NOW.

THEY SAY ONE IS MEASURED BY HOW THEY SPEND THEIR LAST DAYS, STARK...

HOW WILL YOU SIZE UP, I WONDER?

BZZZT

BZZZT

BZZZT

GONNA SIT THERE AND NATTER ALL DAY, OR ARE YOU GOING TO DO YOUR PART, OLD MAN?

FLIPPING THE SWITCH, CYCLING ON...

FULL CONTAINMENT ACHIEVED.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY IRON MEN I HAVE SEEN IN THEIR FINAL MOMENTS?

I DON'T CARE.

ACTIVATING THE SCATTER FIELD. ONE MINUTE TO LAUNCH.

BOOOMMG! BOOMGG!

AH, AND THAT WOULD BE THE SECURITY ALARM. HE IS COMING, STARK.

JUST AS YOU KNEW HE WOULD WHEN YOU TURNED THE MACHINE ON...

IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN AN INVITATION. LAST CHANCE TO STAND DOWN. LAST CHANCE TO SAVE YOURSELF.

TELL ME SOMETHING, XHANG...

CAN YOU EVEN REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO DO THINGS INSTEAD OF JUST TALKING ALL. DAY. LONG?

BZZZ ZA A

KK-Z-ZF

WE CAN'T CUT THROUGH...

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET IN.

WE'RE ALL SLAVES TO ENTROPY, CHILD.

EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN AT THE END, ALL ACTION STOPS...EVERYTHING DIES.

VIBRANIUM DOOR WITH A ROTATING NULL SHIELD.

NO LUCK, SIR.

MOVE ASIDE.

TACHYON GENERATION ONE THOUSAND TIMES ABOVE THE NORM, AND INCREASING...CLASS FIVE CONTAINMENT FIELD...

DNA-BASED TARGETING DRIVE...

PLANNING A LITTLE TRIP, ARE WE?

THIS MACHINE HAS SOME NASTY SECURITY FEATURES BUILT IN, RICHARDS...

DON'T TRY AND STOP ME.

HOW LONG HAVE WE KNOWN EACH OTHER, RHODEY...

IT'S FRANKLIN, ALWAYS FRANKLIN.

DON'T YOU SEE, THEY THREW IT BACKWARDS...

WE CAN USE THIS--WE... I CAN HELP THEM.

IF YOU NEED TO GO... THEN GO...BUT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BUILT HERE, RIGHT?

YES.

AND THE RULES...YOU KNOW THE RULES, DON'T YOU?

THAT THERE ARE NONE?

GODSPEED THEN.

WWWWW

WHFF

FI

MAKE IT COUNT...

...YOU ONLY HAVE THIS ONE SHOT.

AVENGERS TOWER.
NOW.

FORE!

DON'T TAKE IT TOO SERIOUSLY, BUT STANDARD DACOSTA CORPORATE REWARDS TO TODAY'S BIG WINNER...

IS IT GONNA BE CASH OR CARS?

CARS.

FAIR ENOUGH. FIRST TO FIVE...

...GETS A FERRARI.

SPIK

FWOP

I'M

WHAT DO YOU GOT?

I HAVE PREPARED STEAKS, HAMBURGERS, AND VEGGIE BURGERS.

FURTHERMORE, I HAVE GRILLED THE HOT DOG, THOUGH THE QUALITY OF THIS MEAT SEEMS... QUESTIONABLE-- *THIS* I CANNOT RECOMMEND.

I ALSO ATTEMPTED A LOBSTER, BUT THE BEAST DEFEATED ME.

YEAH. I'LL HAVE A HOT DOG.

ME TOO.

SUCH BRAVERY.

TWO DOGS. *EACH.*

AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE, CAPTAIN?

I HAVE HAMBURGERS, VEGGIE BURGE--

PIE.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PIE?

AYE. WE HAVE MADE READY SUCH PASTRIES, AND WE HAVE DONE SO... WITH VIGOR.

BRING FORTH THE PIES!

WE HAVE... MEAD PIE. BEER PIE.

AND FOR THE TRULY DARING... FIMBULVINTER PIE.

HOW DOES THAT SOUND, GOOD CAPTAIN?

SEE...BEFORE TODAY, IF YOU WOULD HAVE SAID BEER PIE, I WOULD'VE SAID NO THANK YOU. DISGUSTING. MOVE ALONG, MISTER...

BUT HERE I AM, NAT. COMPLETELY BEER-PIED.

BEER-PIED AND LOVING IT, JESS.

SOME PARTY, SAM.

MUCH NEEDED. A LOT OF PEOPLE AT THE END OF THEIR WITS...

THIS IS GOOD, CAROL...FOR EVERYONE.

SO... WHERE'S STEVE?

INSIDE WITH TONY. *WORKING.*

NO REST FOR THE WEARY.

OR THE STUBBORN. YOU KNOW HOW HE IS...

"COMMITMENT BEGINS AT OBSESSION."

I PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THIS, TONY, BUT TURNS OUT YOU WERE RIGHT.

WELL... I WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU BEING RIGHT.

BIGGER SOLUTIONS FOR BIGGER PROBLEMS.

THE AVENGERS HELPED WIN AN INTERGALACTIC WAR. THE MACHINE SERVED ITS PURPOSE.

WHICH IS WHAT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

ALL MACHINES NEED FINE TUNING...AND I'VE BEEN TINKERING.

YEAH?

TAKE A LOOK.

CLICK

HE'S STRETCHED TOO THIN AND NOT HEALTHY...SO I'M PULLING WOLVERINE OFF THE BOARD WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT.

OKAY.

SPIDER-MAN HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY ERRATIC--SO I'M DEBATING WHAT TO DO THERE. THAT LEAVES 5, MAYBE 6 SLOTS OPEN THAT WE NEVER FILLED.

I'M PRETTY SET ON STARBRAND AND NIGHTMASK, BUT I'M NOT SURE ABOUT EX NIHILO OR--

YOU'RE OVERTHINKING IT, STEVE...

BEING OVERLY SLAVISH TO THE INITIAL DESIGN.

THIS IS A CONCEPTUAL MECHANISM. BEST TO CONSIDER IT AS SOMETHING UNDERGOING CONSTANT CHANGE.

STARBRAND OR NIGHTMASK... SURE, ANY OF THOSE CAN GO INTO ANY OF THE SLOTS.

BUT PERHAPS A TIME WILL COME WHEN 24 AVENGERS ONLY REPRESENT THE INNER HUB OF WHAT YOU'VE BUILT.

THE POINT ISN'T HOW YOU FILL THE MACHINE, STEVE, OR EVEN HOW IT OPERATES FROM DAY-TO-DAY...

THE POINT IS THAT IT'S NECESSARY--THAT YOU NEED IT--AND THAT YOU HAVE IT AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

NEVER GET MARRIED TO THE IDEA THAT IT'S ENOUGH.

BECAUSE IT ISN'T. IT WON'T BE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, TONY...

I LOOK AROUND AND I SEE WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED, AND I'M HOPEFUL.

"YOU LOOK AT IT, AND SEE BLACK CLOUDS AND END TIMES...WHY IS THAT?"

FFWOO

BZZ

...

I SEE WHAT'S COMING.

FWASSHH

STARK TOWER. TARGET ACHIEVED.

SUN LOCATION. FILTERING LIGHT, ACCESSING STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY...

OH, NO. WE'RE OFF TARGET...THIS ISN'T THE RIGHT DATE...

CAN I HELP YOU, FRIEND?

ANOTHER ANOMALY. THERE SHOULDN'T BE A HYPERION HERE.

WHAT'S GOING ON? THE SECURITY SYSTEM IS--

YOU!

FWOOSH

WHU--!!!

FFWOO

ARGGGHH!

JARVIS?

DNA MATCH.

ANTHONY STARK. TEMPORAL MARKERS CONFIRM HARMONICS... THIS IS THE DESIRED TIMELINE.

FET THAT! WHAT YEAR IS IT?

WHAT YEAR IS IT?

IT...IT'S...2013. DECEMBER...

THANK GOD.

YEAH, MERRY CHRISTMAS, PAL...

DID YOU *BRING ME* ANY PRESENTS?

YOU OKAY?

I'LL LIVE...

ATEMPORAL, HUH? WHY ARE YOU HERE?

AND THE DATE...WHY DOES IT MATTER?

BECAUSE IT MEANS THERE'S STILL TIME.

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT A ROGUE PLANET IS?

"IT'S A CELESTIAL BODY--A WORLD--THAT HAS BROKEN FREE FROM THE GRAVITATIONAL SUPERSTRUCTURE OF A SOLAR SYSTEM...

"FLUNG INTO THE GREATER UNIVERSE AT INCREDIBLE SPEEDS.

"CALL THEM NOMADS--OR EVEN PLANET-SIZED ORPHANS...

"BUT BEST THINK OF THEM AS WHAT THEY REALLY ARE: PROJECTILES OF AN IMPOSSIBLE SIZE.

"THE KIND OF BULLET A GOD WOULD USE."

AND ONE IS HEADED THIS WAY. I'VE CHECKED THE READINGS-- I'VE ALSO HAD DOCTOR BANNER LOOK OVER THE DATA...AND HE AGREES.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE WORST OF IT.

THE PATH IT'S TRAVELLING IS ESSENTIALLY A STRAIGHT LINE--ONE THAT WILL INTERSECT WITH THE EARTH'S ELLIPTICAL ORBIT IN JUST UNDER A MONTH.

WHY DO I GET THE FEELING THAT A WORLD SMASHING INTO OURS IS NOT THE SCARY PART OF WHAT YOU JUST SAID?

IT'S THE "STRAIGHT LINE."

IT IMPLIES ORDERED TRAJECTORY, WHICH IMPLIES "TARGET"... WHICH IMPLIES "SHOOTER."

YOU ALL DO UNDERSTAND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING INITIATED MANY THOUSANDS--IF NOT MILLIONS--OF YEARS AGO.

THE PLANNING...THE CALCULATIONS NECESSARY TO DO SOMETHING OF THAT NATURE...ASTRONOMICAL. AND THE DIFFICULTY INCREASES THE FURTHER BACK IN TIME IT WAS LAUNCHED.

THERE'S A VARIABLE YOU'RE FORGETTING, BRUCE.

OH?

WHAT IF IT WASN'T FIRED FROM THE PAST?

CLEVER BOY... BUT YESTERDAY, TOMORROW...

YOU SHOULD CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH THE NOW...

AND THE WORLD-SHAPED BULLET HEADED DIRECTLY THIS WAY.

MARS.
WEEKS LATER.

THE GARDEN.

ARE WE GOING TO MAKE IT?

IT'S GOING TO BE CLOSE.

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

SO WE NEED MORE TIME, WHICH WE DON'T HAVE...OR MORE MANPOWER.

IS THIS EVEN GOING TO WORK?

THEORETICALLY? SURE. AND WE HAVE A COUPLE THINGS WORKING IN OUR FAVOR:

IRON MAN 3030 POSSESSES SOME INCREDIBLY ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE, AND BY BUILDING ON MARS, WE HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THE RESOURCES WE NEED--EITHER HERE OR IN THE MAIN BELT PAST THE PLANET.

BUT HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE? DOESN'T IT LEND ITSELF TO FUTURE COMPLICATIONS?

RIGHT. BY PREVENTING THIS NOW, AREN'T WE ENSURING THAT THE OTHER IRON MAN DOESN'T KNOW TO COME BACK AND THEN--ZIPPITY ZOO--WE'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE WE STARTED?

YEAH...

THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS.

LATER.

WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME...

I THINK WE NEED MORE HELP WITH CONSTRUCTION OR WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE OUR WINDOW.

THE BASIC A.I. THAT OPERATES THE MACHINE IS ADVANCED ENOUGH TO SELF-REPLICATE NOW.

WE'LL FINISH.

STILL, I--AND THE OTHERS--WOULD FEEL BETTER IF--

AH, APPEARANCES... I REMEMBER THIS FROM THE HOLOS ABOUT YOU.

VERY WELL...FOR APPEARANCES.

THANKS.

YOU'VE BEEN HERE WEEKS AND I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE...

WHY DON'T YOU EVER TAKE OFF YOUR HELMET?

MAYBE I DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW WHO I AM.

MAYBE THERE'S A GOOD REASON FOR THAT.

3030. POST-SINGULARITY. MAYBE YOU LOOK LIKE A MAN, BUT YOU'RE NOT ONE AT ALL...

YOU ARE AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU?

WELL, I'M SMARTER THAN YOU ARE. THAT'S FOR SURE.

HEY...WHAT IS THAT?

WHAT YOU'RE BUILDING... IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING THAT WAS ON THE SPECS.

IT'S YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENT, STARK...

YOU HAVE TO WAIT TO OPEN IT.

IT'S READY.

THREE DAYS LATER.

THE ROGUE PLANET IS ENTERING RANGE...TRAVELING AT AROUND 500,000 MILES PER HOUR.

WE NEED TO GO... RIGHT NOW.

OKAY, EDEN...

GET US OUT THERE.

WE'RE ORBITAL, HULK...GIVE US A PUSH.

YOU'LL NEED TO HIT US PRETTY HARD.

"THE PLANET'S ACTUALLY GOING TO SMASH INTO US, SO GET READY...

"ENTERING THE ROGUE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE.

"STARBRAND, PREPARE THE FOUNDATION.

"EMBEDDING THE MECHANISM."

ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS ACTIVATE THE MACHINE AS WE APPROACH EARTH.

OKAY. CALL THEM.

WE'RE ON THE WAY--BE THERE IN AROUND AN HOUR.

UNDERSTOOD.

WE'LL BE WAITING.

LOOK! WE'RE THERE!

POWERING ON THE MECHANISM...

ENABLING THE SHIELDING-- MOVING THE ROGUE PLANET SLIGHTLY OUT OF PHASE.

"PREPARE FOR IMPACT!

"OVERLAP.

"HYPERION...ARE YOU READY?"

HURK!

I...I HAVE IT.

NOW, BROTHER!

"NOW!"

KRAKK

ONG

"THE AXIS HAS BEEN EMBEDDED. THE ROGUE PLANET IS MARRIED TO THE EARTH.

"BOTH WORLDS... NOW OCCUPYING THE SAME SPACE.

"WE DID IT."

AVENGERS TOWER.
LATER.

HOW MUCH TIME LEFT, JARVIS?

BRANCHING TIMELINES AND OUR INITIAL UNEXPLAINABLE TEMPORAL ERROR MAKE ANY CALCULATIONS UNRELIABLE.

DECAY COMPLICATES THINGS EVER FURTHER.

GUESS.

TWO MINUTES.

SO...HERE'S A CRAZY THEORY: SURE, I COULD BUY THAT IN THE FUTURE SENTIENT MACHINES ARE CAPABLE OF SUCH COMPASSION THEY WOULD ACT AS YOU HAVE...

BUT I DON'T THINK EVEN A BIG-HEARTED TIN MAN WOULD RISK THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO SPACE-TIME AN ACT LIKE THAT MIGHT CAUSE. HELL, BY THEN I'D THINK THERE ARE EVEN RULES AGAINST SUCH THINGS.

THERE ARE.

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. SO I'VE CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT YOU...

I THINK THERE'S SOMEONE IN THERE.

AND I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MADE YOU SO RECKLESS.

RECKLESSNESS... SEEMS TO RUN IN THE FAMILY, GRANDFATHER.

I CAME HERE TO GIVE YOU THIS.

WHAT IS IT?

AN ALTERNATIVE TO WHAT ORIGINALLY HAPPENED. THIS USED TO END WITH YOU AVENGERS DESTROYING THE NOMAD AND SAVING EARTH...

WHAT WE'VE DONE WILL BE MORE USEFUL... DOWN THE LINE.

THE PLANS WERE REAL...

WE TURNED THE ROGUE PLANET INTO A MASSIVE POWER SOURCE FOR THE WORLD. FROM IT, YOU AVENGERS CAN EXTRACT HOWEVER MUCH ENERGY AND RESOURCES YOU NEED...IT'LL BE A GOOD WAY TO SELL ITS EXISTENCE TO THOSE THAT WOULD NORMALLY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH IT...

IT'LL KEEP EVERYONE THINKING THAT IT'S FOR THE GREATER GOOD--WHICH IT IS--BUT IT'LL ALSO HIDE ITS OTHER, TRUER PURPOSE.

REVERSION WAVE DETECTED.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I MADE YOU A NEW WEAPON. JUST WHAT ANY LITTLE BOY NAMED STARK COULD HOPE FOR.

AND IT'S A MUCH BETTER ONE THAN ANTI-MATTER BOMBS, OR EVEN THE SOL'S HAMMER THAT YOUR ILLUMINATI HAVE BEEN BUSY MAKING.

WHY?

BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTMAS.

BECAUSE THE TIME OF YOU HIDING WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING IS ALMOST UP...

BECAUSE PRETTY SOON, EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS GOING TO BE TRYING TO KILL YOU.

I WISH THERE WAS MORE I COULD DO, GRANDFATHER...BUT I CAN'T BECAUSE I'M OUT OF TIME.

"SO GOOD LUCK.

"YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT."

“INHUMANITY”

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

EVERYTHING DIES. YOU. ME. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET. IT'S INEVITABLE, AND I HAVE COME TO ACCEPT IT. WHAT I FIND ***UNACCEPTABLE*** IS THE UNNATURAL ACCELERATION OF THAT END.

ON AN ALTERNATE EARTH AN EVENT OCCURRED THAT CAUSED THE EARLY DEATH OF A UNIVERSE. THIS CAUSED A TINY CONTRACTION, SMASHING TWO UNIVERSES TOGETHER AT THE INCURSION POINT OF THE INITIAL EVENT.

"EACH INCURSION LASTS EIGHT HOURS, AFTER WHICH EITHER BOTH WORLDS ARE DESTROYED...

"...OR ONLY ONE EARTH IS SACRIFICED, SPARING BOTH UNIVERSES.

"WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETECT THE INCURSIONS, SO AT LEAST WE'LL KNOW WHEN ONE IS COMING. HOWEVER...

"...INFINITE WORLDS, INFINITE OUTCOMES. IF THIS COULD EASILY BE STOPPED, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN STOPPED."

BLACK SWAN, YOU JUMPED HERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, DESTROYING THE PLANET YOU CAME FROM.

THE TURN OF THE WHEEL BREAKS HOPE, CRUSHES WHAT MAKES US DECENT AND STEALS WHAT HONOR REMAINS.

WE WILL TRY EVERY GOOD AND RIGHTEOUS SOLUTION WE CAN.

AND IF THOSE DON'T WORK...?

I AM TIRED OF WATCHING OTHERS MAKE CHOICES OF CONSEQUENCE WHILE I DO NOTHING. IF I AM TO BE DAMNED BY THESE DECISIONS, LET IT BE USING ALL THE RESOURCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF A SORCERER SUPREME.

I AM NOT A PAWN.

I AM *THE DOCTOR.*

THE ILLUMINATI

BLACK BOLT
Celestial Messiah

NAMOR
Imperius Rex

REED RICHARDS
Universal Builder

IRON MAN
Master of Machines

BEAST
Hero of Legend

DOCTOR STRANGE
Sorcerer Supreme

BLACK PANTHER
King of the Dead

BLACK SWAN
Incursion Survivor

MAXIMUS
Inhuman Madman

NOW.

EVERYTHING DIES.

YOU. ME. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET.

OUR SUN, OUR GALAXY AND, EVENTUALLY, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

IT'S INEVITABLE.

AND I ACCEPT IT.

WHAT I WILL NOT TOLERATE-- WHAT I FIND *UNACCEPTABLE*--IS THE UNNATURAL ACCELERATION OF THAT END.

WHICH IS WHY WE WERE SUMMONED HERE...

IRON MAN

BLACK PANTHER (T'CHALLA)

CAPTAIN MAR-VELL

BLACK BOLT

BLACK PANTHER (SHURI)

PROFESSOR X

MAGNETO

AS THE UNTIMELY END OF EVERYTHING IS WHAT WE NOW FACE.

EARTH-23099.

THE WORLD CHANGED OVERNIGHT AS THE GREAT MACHINE CAUSED CASCADING GLOBAL TERRIGENESIS.

MAXIMUS, KING OF THE INHUMANS, HAD CREATED THE WELL TO INDUCE THE GREAT CHANGE...

AND TO USHER IN A NEW DAY FOR HIS EXPANDING KINGDOM.

THE ROYAL FAMILY WATCHED AS ALL THE UNCHANGED--THE LOST TRIBES AND THE HIDDEN ONES--BEGAN TO METAMORPHOSE AS THE MIST--THE TRANSFORMATIVE FALLOUT--SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE.

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE START OF A NEW INHUMAN AGE.

INSTEAD, IT MARKED THE END OF THE WORLD.

THE INCURSION POINT SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE NEAR THE CENTER OF THE CITY...

WE HAVE A FULL CLOCK, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE THE INHUMANS WILL COMPLICATE THINGS.

POSSIBLE? ASSURED IS MORE LIKELY. AFTER ALL, WE COUNT THEIR EXCOMMUNICANT LEADER AMONG OUR NUMBER.

CAST OUT FOR OUR ACTIONS--ACTIONS THAT WE MAY VERY WELL HAVE TO REPLICATE TODAY...

THE INCURSION WALL IS HERE.

LOOK!

THERE...FALLING TOWARDS US FROM THE OTHER EARTH...

WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR ACTIONS HERE TODAY.

"THEIR WORLD WILL NOT FALL QUIETLY TOWARDS OBLIVION."

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.
EARTH-616.

NAHU, YABBOT. YOU ARE NOT LISTENING.

MUST I SPEAK SLOWER? OR SHALL I USE SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER WORDS?

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT WORKS WHERE YOU COME FROM, BLACK SWAN, BUT HERE... CONSTRAINED BY THE FUNDAMENTAL LAWS THAT GOVERN THIS UNIVERSE...

YOU CAN'T ASK A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS TO BUILD SOMETHING THAT'S "BASICALLY A LOOKING BOX POWERED BY PERCEPTION AND NECESSITY."

THAT'S JUST GIBBERISH, LADY.

MAYBE A DIFFERENT TACK. WE COULD WORK BACKWARDS. REVERSE-ENGINEER THE IDEA.

FIRST THINGS FIRST, BEFORE WE INVEST TIME WE ALL KNOW WE DON'T HAVE...

WHY DO WE NEED IT-- AND WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT DO?

YOU NEED IT BECAUSE WITHOUT IT YOU REMAIN AT A DISADVANTAGE. YOU NEED IT BECAUSE THEY ALREADY HAVE IT.

AND WHO WOULD *THEY* BE?

IT COULD BE ANY NUMBER OF INEVITABLE ADVERSARIES YOU WILL SHORTLY FACE, BUT YOU SHOULD PRIMARILY CONCERN YOURSELVES WITH THE BLACK PRIESTS.

AS THEY TEND TO MOVE THROUGH SPACE AND TIME THE WAY YOU WOULD--SO THEY USE THE *MIRRORS* TO NAVIGATE THEIR WAY.

SO IT'S A WAY TO VIEW THINGS--A *MIRROR*, AS IT HAS A FACE... MEANING A SCREEN OF SOME SORT...

GO ON. WHAT DOES IT DO?

IT ALLOWS YOU TO SEE OTHER EARTHS.

SO...WE'RE TALKING ABOUT COMPLEX RATES OF OCCURANCE--UNIVERSAL OSCILLATIONS OR WAVES. THAT KIND OF ARCHITECTURE DEMANDS SOME VARIATION OF A QUANTUM DRIVE. EITHER A POWER SOURCE OR A CONVERTER... SOMETHING.

WHAT ELSE?

IF YOU USE A MIRROR, AND FOCUS YOUR NEEDS...

VARIABLES. PARAMETERS.

NEEDS. THEN YOU CAN OBSERVE OTHER INCURSIONS AS THEY ARE OCCURRI--

OH.

DAMN.

WHAT IS IT, REED?

THESE OBSERVATIONS. WE'D BASICALLY BE LOOKING FOR A SPECIFIC FREQUENCY. SCANNING THE HARMONICS FOR A CONSTANT.

IN OUR CASE, OTHER INCURSIONS.

IT WOULD WORK BECAUSE ALL INCURSIONS HAVE THE SAME PARAMETERS AND CAN BE FOUND AND OBSERVED THROUGH A PROCESS OF...CALL IT INFINITE ELIMINATION.

YES. THE *MIRROR.*

YOU UNDERSTAND.

OF COURSE I DO.

I CAN EVEN BUILD IT.

OH, REALLY? NOT GETTING A LITTLE AHEAD OF YOURSELF, ARE YOU?

UNFORTUNATELY, NO.

I'VE ACTUALLY BUILT ONE BEFORE, ANTHONY. WHAT SHE CALLS A MIRROR...

...I CALLED THE BRIDGE.

"THE IDEA OF LIGHT AND DARK--GOOD AND EVIL--CHAOS AND ORDER...I CALL THESE INTO QUESTION.

"THAT THESE CONCEPTS DEFINE THE EDGES OF ALL THAT EXISTS IS CONTRARY TO THE WRITINGS FOUND IN THE BLU'DAKORR.

"THE BLOOD BIBLE SPEAKS OF IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES...OF GOODS GREATER THAN GOOD... OF DARKS DARKER THAN DARK...

"THESE IMPERCEPTIBLE STATES LIE BEYOND THE NORMAL UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH THE NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL.

"THEY DO SO BECAUSE TO PERCEIVE THEM, ONE MUST ABANDON FOREVER THE OLD WAYS IN WHICH WE SAW ALL THINGS.

"ONE MUST SACRIFICE EVERYTHING.

"I WILL PLUCK OUT MY OWN EYES IF IT MEANS I CAN SEE AGAIN.

"I WILL TEAR OUT MY OWN TONGUE IF IT MEANS I COULD ONCE MORE UTTER WORDS OF POWER.

"IF IT COST MY VERY SOUL TO HAVE THESE THINGS... THEN SO BE IT.

"I AM READY TO PAY."

EARTH-23099.

GRRR

X-MEN '97

TINK.
TINK.
TINK.

BLACK BOLT!

RAISE YOUR VOICE!

THEY SEEM UNAFFECTED BY THE POWER COSMIC...

RESILIENT-- RE-FORMING INSTEAD OF SPLINTERING APART.

TINK.
TINK.
TINK.

NO EFFECT, CHARLES!

WHOEVER THESE CREATURES ARE, MAGNETO...THEIR PURPOSE MUST PARALLEL OURS REGARDING THE INCURSIONS.

IF THEY PLAN AND SCHEME, THEY CAN BE CONTROLLED. AND IF NOT CONTROLLED, THEN PERHAPS I CAN FATHOM WHAT THEIR...

AMBITIONS MIGHT...BE...

FIIIIND ANYTHIIIIING IIIIINTERESTIIIIING?

MY GOD...

NOT ONE MIND, BUT THOUSANDS...TENS OF THOUSANDS. UNFATHOMABLE.

WE HAVE NO TIME FOR MYSTERIES, CHARLES...

LET'S UNCOVER WHAT THESE CREATURES REALLY ARE.

WE SEE YOU.

WE SEE YOU.

WE SEE YOU.

WE SEE YOU.

WE SEE YOU.

NECROPOLIS.

"ARE YOU SURE THIS WILL WORK?"

OF COURSE.

THE ORIGINAL DESIGN HAD A CONTAINED SINGULARITY POWERING AN UNCERTAINTY ENGINE. ATTACHED TO THAT WAS A VARIABLE IMAGER TO ACCURATELY INTERPRET DATA MINED FROM ALTERNATE REALITIES.

THE IDEA WAS AN OBSERVATION DEVICE TO SEE HOW PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED ON OTHER EARTHS.

LIMIT WHAT YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR...

CLEARLY DEFINE THE PARAMETERS...

AND YOU CAN WATCH THE GLORIOUS DEATH OF UNIVERSES AS EARTH CRASHES INTO EARTH.

RABUM ALAL BE PRAISED.

WELL...I'M NOT SURE IMPRESSIVE IS THE RIGHT WORD... STILL...

HOW COULD WE COME SO FAR AND NOT TAKE A LOOK?

EARTH-23099.

MATTER REORGANIZATION IMPLIES NO ORGANS, WHICH DEMANDS A RETHINKING REGARDING WEAKNESS.

IT DEMANDS A RETHINKING REGARDING THE LAWS BY WHICH THEY ARE GOVERNED.

NOT CREATURES OF SCIENCE...BUT MAGIC.

HRRRNNNN.

SCIIIIIENCE. MAGIIIIC.

THESE CONCEPTS ARE... AMUSIIIIIIIG.

A LESSON FOR YOU, DEFENDERS OF A SOON DYIIIIIIG WORLD.

IIIIIIGNORE DIIIISCIIIIPLIIIIINES, THE UNDERPIIIIINIIIIG OF ALL THIIIIIIGS IIIIIIS MUCH SIIIIIMPLER. ALL THAT MATTERS ARE THE WORDS...

ALL OTHER THIIIIIGS ARE BEST LEFT UNSPOKEN.

AAIIEEEEEEE!

...

SO IIIIT IIIIIIS...AS IIIIT ALWAYS IIIIIIIS.

MANY CANNOT ENDURE THE WORDS.

ARE THERE OTHERS HERE WE NEED TO SPEAK WIIIITH BEFORE WE CLAIIIIIIM THIIIIIS SPACE?

HRRRNNN... WATCHERS WATCHIIIIING... THERE'S A MIIIIRROR ACTIIIIVE HERE.

IIIIIIIS THAT YOU LOOKIIIIIG ON, MAPMAKERS?

OR DO I HAVE THE HONOR OF ADDRESSIIIIIING AN EBONY KIIIIIIIING?

A DAY IIIIIS COMIIIIING-- CONVERGENCE.

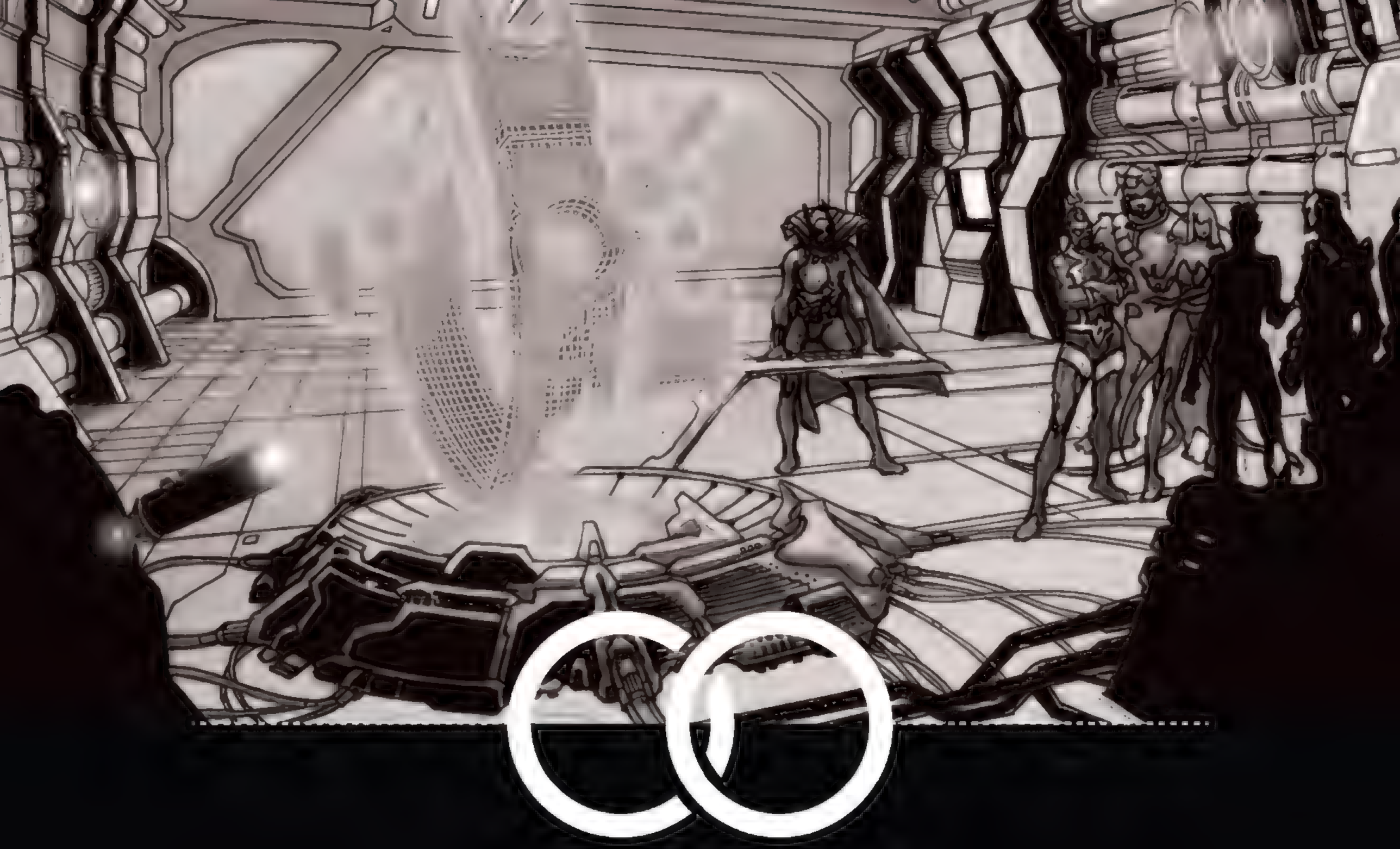
AND ON THAT DAY, THE FIIIIINAL WORD WIIIIILL BE SPOKEN.

IIIIIF ALL THAT YOU HAVE BELIIIIIEVED HAS LED YOU TO A PLACE OPPOSIIIIIING US... THE BLACK PRIIIIESTS...

"THEN YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELVES...

"WHAT VALUE DOES YOUR LIIIIIFE HAVE AT ALL?

"WHAT HOPE IIIIIS THERE?"



“THE AGAMOTTO GAMBIT”

NOW.

EVERYTHING DIES.

YOU. ME. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET.

OUR SUN, OUR GALAXY AND, EVENTUALLY, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

IT'S INEVITABLE.

AND I ACCEPT IT.

YELLOWJACKET

CAPTAIN BRITAIN (BETSY BRADDOCK)

CAPTAIN BRITAIN (BRIAN BRADDOCK)

IRON MAN

BLACK PANTHER

WHAT I WILL NOT TOLERATE-- WHAT I FIND *UNACCEPTABLE*--IS THE UNNATURAL ACCELERATION OF THAT END.

WHICH IS WHY WE WERE SUMMONED HERE...

DR. DOOM

EMMA FROST

AS THE UNTIMELY END OF EVERYTHING IS WHAT WE NOW FACE.

EARTH-2319. (UNDER OBSERVATION.)

THE FOURTH AGE OF APOCALYPSE ENDED WITH THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY-NATION OF TIAN AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE PHOENIX EGGS.

MAGNETO, SAVIOR OF ALL MUTANTS, HAD GATHERED THE SURVIVORS OF THE WORLD'S SECOND HOLOCAUST AND BROUGHT THEM TO HIS NEW KINGDOM.

A PLACE CALLED HEAVEN, WHERE ALL HIS ANGELS WOULD BE SAFE...

SAFE FROM ALL THE DEVILS THAT STILL HUNTED THEM.

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER WORLD.

INSTEAD, IT WAS SOON TO BE NO WORLD AT ALL.

THE INCURSION POINT SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE IN TIAN'S TWIN CITIES...

WE HAVE A FULL CLOCK, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE THE MUTANTS WILL COMPLICATE THINGS.

POSSIBLE? ASSURED IS MORE LIKELY. AFTER ALL, HOW MANY OF US STOOD BY AND DID NOTHING--NOT EVEN OFFERING A HELPING HAND?

FITTING THAT THEY MIGHT HOLD THE KEY TO OUR SALVATION IN THEIRS...

THE INCURSION WALL IS HERE.

LOOK!

THERE...FALLING TOWARDS US FROM THE OTHER EARTH...

WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR ACTIONS HERE TODAY.

"THIS WORLD WILL NOT FALL QUIETLY TOWARDS OBLIVION."

THE LOST LANDS.

ANCIENT... BEYOND ANCIENT...

OLD AS MEMORY ARE THE RULES BY WHICH THIS PLACE IS GOVERNED.

HERE, THERE ARE NO SECRET DEALS OR HIDDEN ARRANGEMENTS TO BE HAD--THERE IS ONLY THE TRANSACTION AND NOTHING ELSE.

YOU UNDERSTAND OUR CURRENCY, DON'T YOU?

I DO.

THEN NAME YOURSELF AND WHAT IT IS YOU DESIRE.

I AM DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE...THE SORCERER SUPREME, AND I AM HERE TO BUY.

HOW WONDERFUL.

WELL THEN, MORTAL...

WELCOME.

WELCOME TO THE SINNER'S MARKET.

AS YOU CAN SEE...WE DO A GREAT DEAL OF BUSINESS.

THERE ARE QUITE A FEW DEALERS OF THE LIGHTER FARE, BUT AS OUR NAME SUGGESTS, THE MARKET HAS A TENDENCY TO SKEW DARK... NECROMANCY, DEMIONICS, ETC., ETC.

THAT IT WERE SO SIMPLE. OVER TIME, I HAVE LEARNED THAT THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BLACK AND WHITE ARTS.

THERE IS ONLY THE PRICE... WHICH IS ALWAYS STEEP.

YES. ABOUT THAT. A SMALL PIECE OF ADVICE BEFORE WE BEGIN...

THE MARKET TENDS TO ADAPT TO THE BUYER--THE LONGER YOU STAY, THE MORE THINGS WILL CATCH YOUR EYE. SO SPECIFICITY WILL SERVE YOU WELL.

I IMPLORE YOU, DOCTOR...GUARD YOUR HEART AGAINST WANTS AND FOCUS ON WHAT YOU TRULY NEED.

DO YOU THINK SOMEONE FINDS THEMSELVES IN THIS PLACE WITHOUT THEM BEING THE SAME?

FUHL-MAHGAHL. THE MIND WANDERS... WHO CAN SAY?

SHALL WE?

YES.

VERY WELL...

WHAT IS IT EXACTLY THAT YOU WISH TO BUY TODAY? LONGEVITY?

BLISS?

LOVE?

NO...NONE OF THESE THINGS.

WHAT THEN?

I WANT POWER.

POWER? BUT YOU HAVE SO MUCH ALREADY.

I NEED MORE.

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO MOVE WORLDS AND SHAKE THEM TO THEIR FOUNDATIONS. I WANT ENOUGH POWER IN MY HANDS TO TEAR PLANETS FROM THE HEAVENS AND PLACE THEM IN A NEW SKY.

OH. I SEE.

YOU'LL BE WANTING THE THRONE THEN.

FAIR ENOUGH. THIS WAY.

EARTH-2319.
(UNDER OBSERVATION.)

THE SIDERA MARIS ARE THE FORERUNNERS OF THE MAPMAKERS.

BRIDGE-BUILDING AUTOMATONS WHO USE INCURSIONS TO MARK NEW TERRITORY FOR THEIR MASTERS.

THESE SOLDIER SURVEYORS WERE CREATED TO MARK TERRITORY...NOT FOR LONGEVITY. THEY ARE COMBAT FODDER, MEANT ONLY TO ENDURE LONG ENOUGH TO CALL THEIR MASTERS.

GRIST FOR THE MULTIVERSAL MILL.

INCURSION ACHIEVED, BUT RESISTANCE THREATENS MISSION SUCCESS.

MAPPING WORLD... AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

FWASSHH

NEW WORLDS.

NEVER ENOUGH WORLDS.

INCURSION POINT ANALYSIS?

THREAT LEVEL: ASSESSING...

POSTHUMAN DENSITY: ELEVATED.

"CATALOGING..."

THREAT LEVEL: OMEGA.

ADAPTING...

GENETIC MARKERS DEFINED.

LAUNCHING GENE SPECIFIC NEUTRALIZER.

"RE-CODING MESSENGER RNA AS ATEMPORAL."

NOOOOO...

MY GOD!

INITIAL THREAT CONTAINED.

INCURSION POINT DESTABILIZING...

WORLD MAPPED. ANCHOR PLANET NO LONGER NECESSARY...

TERMINATING WORLD.

TERTIARY THREATS... ANALYZING.

PREPARE TO HARVEST WORLD... NO RECOGNIZABLE THREATS DETECTED.

GO HOME, REMAINING HUMANS...WE PERMIT YOUR EXODUS.

YOU PERMIT US...?

ARE WE ON BENDED KNEE? ARE WE BEATEN?

NO!

QUICKLY! YOU ALL SAW WHAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF!

DON'T HOLD BACK!

IS IT PRIMAL INSTINCT? THIS VIOLENT REACTION TO DEATH?

IT TAKES WEEKS FOR US TO FULLY HARVEST A WORLD. YOU COULD HAVE *THAT* INSTEAD OF THIS... *NOTHING.*

WORLD AFTER WORLD AFTER WORLD...THIS IS WHAT YOU BIONISMS CHOOSE.

ONE CANNOT HIT FINALITY.

HURK!

INTERESTING...

ANALYZING... TRACES OF NON-NATIVE ATOMIC TYPES... QUANTUM SIGNATURES...

YOU POSSESS THE ABILITY TO TRAVERSE THE MULTIVERSE. WHY WOULD YOU FAIL TO RUN?

I DON'T RUN.

AND IF I OFFER YOU DEATH OR FLIGHT?

I DON'T RUN.

VERY WELL.

WHAT ARE YO--

BZZZTT!

VICTOR! WE'VE LOST EVERYONE BUT ANTHONY...AND I THINK HE'S OUT OF COMMISSION.

WE NEED TO PULL BACK AND CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS.

THERE IS NO WITHDRAWING FROM THE CENTER OF A BATTLE, REED. WE DARE NOT SHOW THESE CREATURES OUR BACKS.

BESIDES...

WHY FLEE FROM THAT WHICH CAN BE CONQUERED?

OMEGA-LEVEL THREAT DETECTED.

THAT MAKER ACHIEVED CONSCIOUSNESS ONE HUNDRED CYCLES AGO. IT MAPPED THOUSANDS OF EARTHS.

IT WAS... IRREPLACEABLE.

PRIORITY OVERRIDE.

LOSS OF FULL HARVEST... ACCEPTABLE.

VICTOR! LOOK OUT!

AAEEEEEE!

DAY BY DAY...

YEAR BY YEAR...

WORLD BY WORLD...

THE IDEA OF WHO YOU ARE, AND WHAT YOU STOOD FOR, WILL CRUMBLE AND DECAY BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES.

LOOK IN THE MIRROR LONG ENOUGH...

AND ONE DAY YOU WON'T RECOGNIZE THE MAN LOOKING BACK AT YOU.

EVERYTHING DIES.

THE SINNER'S MARKET.

HERE WE ARE...JUST AS I PROMISED.

THE RESOLUTE THRONE IS JUST INSIDE. ONE CANNOT ENTER TWICE, SO I MAY NOT ENTER AT ALL.

I WISH YOU LUCK... AND THE GOOD FORTUNE TO BARTER WISELY.

HI.

HELLO. I'M LOOKING FOR--

YES. THE THRONE.

YOU DO SEE THE GIANT THRONE BESIDE ME AND NOT MUCH ELSE IN THE ROOM, RIGHT?

YOU'RE LIKE THE THIRD MOST DISAPPOINTING SORCERER SUPREME I'VE EVER MET, STEPHEN...

...AND THIS DIDN'T END WELL FOR THE OTHER TWO.

HAVE A SEAT.

HOW MANY OTHERS WERE THERE?

OH, JUST THE THREE... BUT YOU'RE STILL BREATHING, YOU SEE?

SO... YOU'RE WINNING BY DEFAULT.

YOU'VE COME FOR POWER, YES?

I HAVE.

IT'S A CLEANER TRANSACTION THAN THE OTHER PRINCIPALITIES WE TRADE IN. THAT'S GOOD FOR YOU.

THE SIMPLER THE DEAL FOR THE LADY, THE LESS CHANCE FOR CONFUSION.

THE PROBLEM IS, WITH POWER THE COST IS HIGH...AND THE PAYMENT CANNOT BE DEFERRED, TRANSFERRED, OR SCREWED WITH IN ANY MANNER.

IF YOU OWE, *YOU OWE.*

HOW MUCH?

THAT DEPENDS ON THE PROPORTIONS...

WE DEAL IN DEGREES OF GODHOOD. MAN IS WHOLE AND IN FULL POSSESSION OF HIS SOUL...THIS IS HER PRICE. WE BARTER BY FIFTHS...AS THIS IS THE NUMBER OF MAN.

FOR THE SLOW AND UNLEARNED: IF YOU WANT TO HAVE TWENTY PERCENT OF THE POWER OF A GOD, IT WILL COST YOU ONE-FIFTH OF YOUR SOUL.

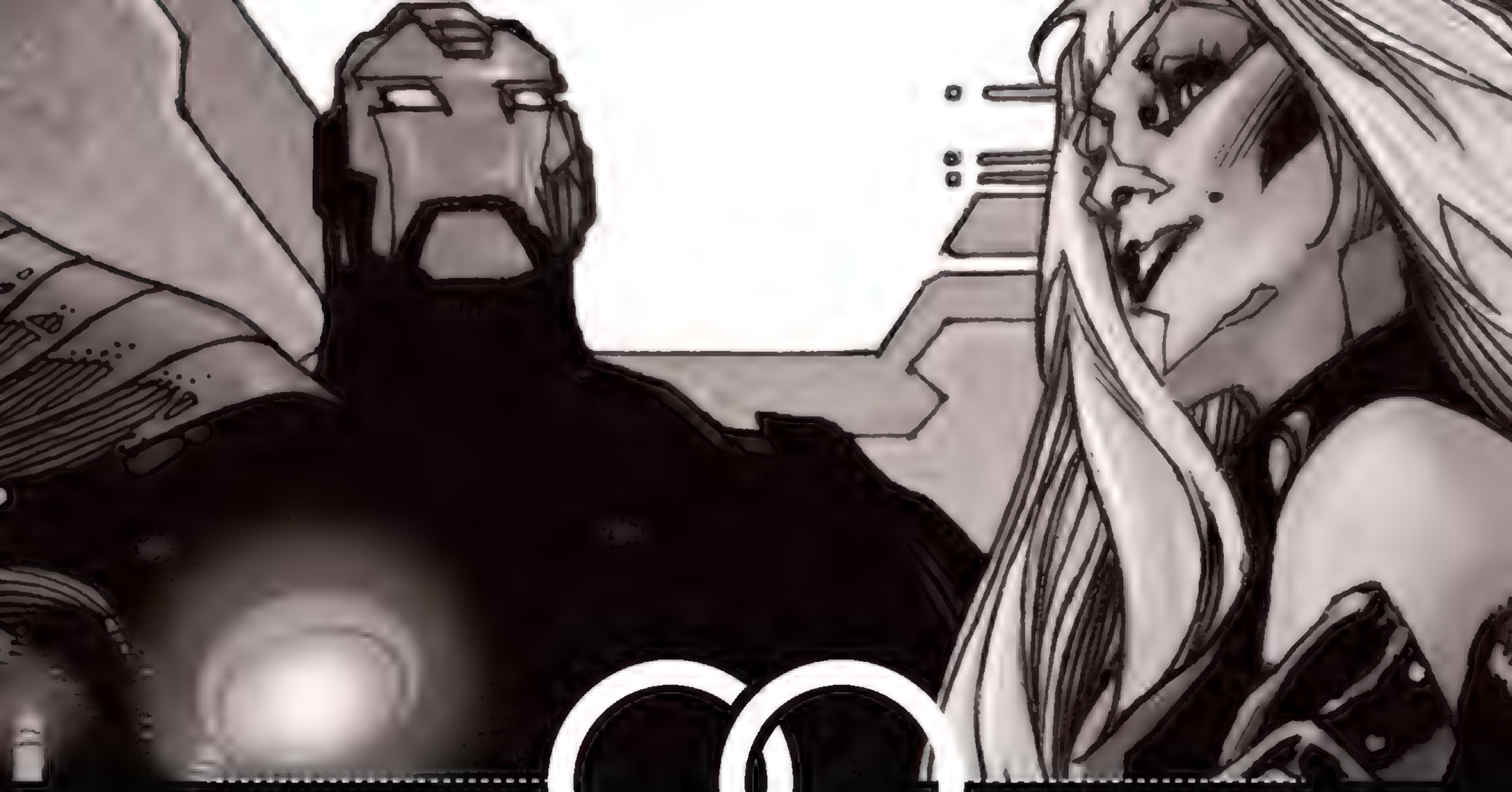
SO ARE YOU SELLING YOUR SOUL, STEPHEN?

I AM.

HOW MUCH?

HOW MUCH OF YOUR SOUL DO YOU SELL THIS DAY?

ALL OF IT.



“SEE HOW THE SWANS FLY”

WAKANDA!
THE NECROPOLIS.

WHY ARE WE MISSING PEOPLE?

I SPOKE WITH NAMOR. HE SAID THAT UNLESS THE WORLD WAS ENDING, HE WOULD RETURN LATER IN THE WEEK.

I TRIED TO CONVEY HOW URGENT THIS WAS...

AND?

HE EXPRESSED HIS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO "MUFF A SQUID" WITHOUT HIM.

HRMPT!

WHAT ABOUT STRANGE?

NOTHING. FOR DAYS NOW.

AND IT'S NOT JUST A LACK OF RESPONSE... HIS IMPLANT HAS DISAPPEARED--HE'S COMPLETELY OFF-GRID.

IT IMPLIES THAT HE'S LEFT THIS WORLD FOR SOME OTHER PLANE.

UNLESS, OF COURSE, IT'S SUBTERFUGE...AND THE GOOD DOCTOR SEEKS A SAVVY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GAME TO END ALL GAMES.

SHOULD WE WAIT? OR...

I DON'T THINK WE CAN.

HENRY, PLEASE...

LET'S SHOW EVERYONE WHAT YOU'VE DISCOVERED.

YES. WELL... OBSERVATION.

CATALOGING INCURSIONS HAS, AS YOU VERY WELL KNOW, BEEN A BLEAK AND DISHEARTENING ENDEAVOR. I'M HONESTLY NOT SURE WHICH IS WORSE...

THE WAY ALL WORLDS END: HORRIBLY.

OR THE SHOCKINGLY REPETITIVE NATURE OF WHAT WE'RE LEARNING...

"EITHER BLACK PRIESTS AGGRESSIVELY PROTECTING THEIR ARCANE HOME EARTHS...

"MAPMAKERS SYSTEMATICALLY MINING THE MULTIVERSE FOR EARTHS TO DESTROY...

"OR TWO UNIVERSES DYING AS EARTHS COLLIDE."

THE THING, HOWEVER, ABOUT REPETITION IS IF YOU WITNESS SOMETHING ENOUGH TIMES, YOU BEGIN TO PICK UP ON INCREMENTAL DIFFERENCES.

IN THIS CASE, I NOTICED SOMETHING ODD... *DECAY.*

DECAY?

TIME. I'M NOT AS PROFICIENT AS... ACTUALLY...

REED, IT'S THE SPECIFICS OF *YOUR* MACHINE, COULD YOU...?

OF COURSE.

YOU MEAN OF THE IMAGE? SOUND? WHAT?

THINK OF IT LIKE DOPPLER SHIFT.

THE SAME NOISE SOUNDS DIFFERENT APPROACHING YOU THAN MOVING AWAY FROM YOU.

ROUGHLY THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES CELESTIALLY--RED AND BLUE SHIFT FOR THE CONTRACTION AND EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSE.

WHAT HENRY NOTICED IS, FUNDAMENTALLY, THIS SAME CONCEPT.

AS YOU KNOW, THE BRIDGE PRIMARILY FUNCTIONS AS AN OBSERVATION DEVICE.

THE DATA SET FOR RUNNING A SEARCH THROUGH BOTH ALL REALITIES AND ALL TIMES IS INFINITE, AND THEREFORE NOT OBSERVABLE. WELL, OBSERVABLE IN THE SENSE THAT--

YOU'RE MAKING MY TEETH HURT, REED.

ALL RIGHT, THE POINT: IF WE TRIED TO DO THAT--LOOK AT EVERYTHING--THE MACHINE WOULD NEVER STOP THINKING, AND WE WOULD NEVER GET TO "SEE" ANY RESULTS.

SO WHEN I BUILT IT, I LIMITED IT TO TAKING...FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD, A ***SNAPSHOT*** OF ALL REALITIES AT THAT SINGLE MOMENT.

AND THAT'S WHAT THE BRIDGE SEARCHES...SNAPSHOTS OF MULTIVERSES, STACKED SIDE-BY-SIDE.

ONCE WE FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR--UP UNTIL NOW, INCURSIONS--WE BASICALLY TUNE INTO THAT MULTIVERSAL "STATION" AND OBSERVE THAT SNAPSHOT GOING FORWARD. WHICH BRINGS US TO HENRY...

AND HOW THINGS ARE WORSE THAN WE EVER IMAGINED.

MANY WORLDS IMPLIES MANY VARIABLES. PERHAPS ON ONE EARTH, THE SOVIET UNION NEVER FELL. ON ANOTHER, MAN NEVER LANDED ON THE MOON.

THIS IS PRETTY MUCH THE FOUNDATION OF EVERY PIECE OF BAD SCIENCE FICTION EVER WRITTEN.

BUT IT'S ***REAL*** AND WE'RE SEEING IT--AND IN SEEING IT OFTEN, I BEGAN TO NOTICE THINGS THAT SEEMED TOO...OFF. TEMPORALLY SPEAKING.

AH! YOU MEAN...IT'S LIKE SEEING STARS IN THE NIGHT SKY, DON'T YOU? EACH ONE A DIFFERENT DISTANCE AWAY, AND THEREFORE THE LIGHT A DIFFERENT AGE AND...

YES.

OH, THEN THAT MEANS...

YES.

LOOK, I'M A BILLIONAIRE INVENTOR--CONSIDERED PRETTY SMART BY MOST...

AND, OH MY GOD, I'M GOING TO ***KILL*** ONE OF YOU IF YOU DON'T JUST SPIT IT OUT.

HE MEANS THE FURTHER AWAY FROM THE CENTER POINT OF OBSERVATION, WE'RE NOT JUST LOOKING AT DIFFERENT UNIVERSES...WE'RE LOOKING AT DIFFERENT ***TIMES***.

SO WE CAN USE THIS TO LOOK INTO THE PAST AS WELL AS THE FUTURE.

ACTUALLY, MOSTLY JUST THE PAST. WE'VE DISCOVERED THAT THE FUTURE'S PROBABILITY CURVE BENDS THE OPPOSITE WAY.

THERE ARE ONLY MINUTES, MAYBE AN HOUR OR TWO DEPENDING ON PROXIMITY, OF OBSERVABLE FUTURE.

SO YOU'RE THINKING THAT WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE YOU CAN FURTHER INVESTIGATE...AND PERHAPS FIND THE CAUSE OF ALL THIS END-TIMES-END-OF-MAN DRAMA.

GET RIGHT TO THE HEART OF IT.

ANTHONY... I ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE A LITTLE MORE AMBITIOUS IN YOUR THINKING.

AFTER ALL, THE REALLY ***GOOD*** STUFF IS GROWING ON THE SKIN.

RIGHT. THANKS.

BUT I THINK THE REST OF US WOULD AGREE THAT WE'RE BETTER OFF STAYING ON TASK.

ACTUALLY...

HE HAS A POINT. HENRY AND I DID EXACTLY WHAT MAXIMUS IS TALKING ABOUT. AND IT'S WHAT I WANTED YOU ALL TO SEE...

CONCLUSIONS-- GOOD ONES--ALL SPRING FROM RAW DATA. WE QUESTIONED THE PURITY OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

CONSIDERING OUR SOURCE, REED AND I DECIDED TO RUN A BROADER SEARCH.

FOR WHAT?

SWANS.

"THE A.I. RUNNING THE BRIDGE'S SEARCH FUNCTION IS STILL SPOOLING THROUGH MULTIPLE SEARCH RETURNS...

"BUT SO FAR WE'VE FOUND THREE INSTANCES CONTAINING THE PERSON WE BELIEVE TO BE *OUR* BLACK SWAN.

"THIS IS THE FIRST ONE."

SHHH

SHHH

YOU MAY COME OUT NOW, CHILD.

IS IT DEAD?

THE BLACK PRIESTS ARE NOT ALIVE IN THE SENSE THAT YOU AND I ARE, YABBOT.

THEY ARE MORE LIKE... ANIMATED *THINGS* THAT FEIGN LIFE. ABOMINATIONS THAT CHEAT THE GREAT WHEEL.

WE CAN DESTROY THEM-- ALL *THINGS* CAN BE DESTROYED--BUT THAT IS NOT WHY WE ARE HERE, IS IT?

NO.

THE LIBRARY LIES ON A SEPARATE AXIS THAN THE WORLDS TO WHICH IT OPENS. SO WHILE IT HAS BEEN YEARS SINCE YOU LEFT THIS PLACE-- AND IT IS LONG GONE-- WE HAVE RETURNED MERE MOMENTS AFTER YOU FOUND YOUR WAY TO US.

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

OF COURSE I AM.

"THEN HURRY, LITTLE SISTER.

"I WILL HOLD THE DOOR OPEN AS LONG AS I CAN."

I'M SORRY, DADINGRA...

THEY HAVE TAUGHT ME THAT RABUM ALAL HAS NEEDS GREATER THAN OUR OWN--WE ALL SERVE THE WHEEL...

BUT THERE ARE REWARDS FOR THE FAITHFUL.

AND I WILL BE FAITHFUL.

FOR THE BOTH OF US.

BOOM!

WHAT IIIIIIIIS THIIIIIIIIIIS?

A LIIIIIIITTLE SWAN LOST HER WAY?

NO, YOU MONSTER... I'M *NOT* LOST.

THIS WAS MY *HOME!*

ZZZZAAA

ONCE AGAIIIIIIIN, THEY MOVE TO THAT OTHER PLACE WE CANNOT FIIIIIIIND.

ALL THOSE WORLDS, HIIIIIIDIIIIIING BEHIIIIIND THOSE DOORS.

LOST TO US. OUTSIIIIDE OUR REACH.

PERHAPS... PERHAPS NOT.

WE NOW HAVE A KEY.

AND THAT'S WHERE IT ENDS REGARDING THE BLACK SWAN.

THE PRIESTS LEAVE SHORTLY AFTER DESTROYING THE WORLD, AND IT SEEMS THAT THE BRIDGE CANNOT OBSERVE PAST THE DOOR...

MEANING...THIS LIBRARY LIES OUTSIDE THE OBSERVABLE MULTIVERSE.

DOES IT MATTER? DIDN'T THE SWAN SAY IT WAS DESTROYED?

I THINK, PERHAPS, WE MIGHT NEED TO REVISIT WHAT IS AND IS NOT ACCEPTED TRUTH REGARDING HER.

BEFORE WE GET TO THAT... HERE'S THE SECOND THING WE FOUND.

MY GOD.

WHY DOES IT END LIKE THAT? ISN'T THERE MORE?

NO. IT JUST WINKS IN AND OUT OF...I'M NOT SURE IF ***EXISTENCE*** IS THE CORRECT PHRASE, BUT IT'S ***THERE*** AND THEN IT'S ***NOT***.

BUT IT GETS WORSE.

"WATCH."

LIKE THIS. KI WASSURU.

WHY?

AND THAT'S IT?

THAT'S ALL THERE IS?

WE GIVE HIM PRAISE BECAUSE OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN HIS NAME.

WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH...AND LOOK WHAT HE HAS GIVEN US: A GREATER OFFERING.

A NEW WORLD.

WERE YOU EXPECTING MORE, *RICHARDS?*

DID I PROMISE YOU MORE?

ALL WE WANTED TO DO WAS SAVE OUR WORLD.

AND I TOLD YOU... MANY, MANY TIMES...

THERE IS *NO SAVING* YOUR WORLD. THERE IS NO SAVING... ANYTHING.

THERE IS ONLY THE WHEEL.

SUHARRURU! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THIS HAS COST US?

WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO HELP YOU, *BELIEVING* THAT THIS COULD BE AVOIDED?

YES, *ANTHONY.* YOU'VE SACRIFICED ALL THAT YOU HAD.

YOU FOUND THIS WORLD'S *MANIFOLD* SO THAT *HE* COULD BE USED AS RABUM ALAL INTENDED...

YOU'VE KILLED THOSE YOU CALLED FRIENDS...

AND YOU'VE DONE IT VERY, VERY WELL.

NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS YOUR REWARD.

WE CAN STOP YOU.

YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T.

SO... WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

OF COURSE YOU DO. YOU CAN COME WITH ME, OR DIE HERE WITH YOUR EARTH.

BUT SURELY A CLEVER MAN LIKE YOU KNEW THAT ALREADY.

FLAME ON!

NO.

?

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT I NEEDED TO.

HE WAS BRILLIANT LIKE THE SUN...SO THAT'S WHERE I SENT HIM.

LAST CHANCE, STARK.

ARE YOU A KILLER OF WORLDS...OR JUST YOUR OWN?

YOU GO TO HELL.

WHAT DO YOU THINK EARTH *IS*, LITTLE MAN?

SKK-RAK!

SO...WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

NECROPOLIS.
LATER.

DAMLI RABUM ALAL! DAMLI UGGAE!

NAPAHU QUPPU! YABBOT DUGNAMTAR!

WARDUM ANA SIMTIM ALAKU.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU STUPID, STUPID MEN?

RABUM ALAL IS COMING FOR *EVERYTHING.*

AND WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND *WHAT* HE IS—WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND *WHO* HE IS...

YOU'LL KNOW THAT I WAS RIGHT, AND YOU SO COMPLETELY WRONG.

ANA SIMTIM ALAKU.

THEN YOU WILL DIE, THINKING OF ME...WHO WILL BE SO VERY LONG GONE.

I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

MAKE PEACE WITH FINALITY, SWAN...

YOU'RE NEVER GETTING OUT OF THAT CELL.

EPILOGUE.

I WILL NOT TELL YOU THAT YOU WON'T MISS YOUR FREEDOM.

YOU WILL.

BUT I HAVE FOUND THAT...THIS **EXISTENCE** PROVIDES ME THE SOLITUDE NECESSARY TO TRULY CONTEMPLATE OUR PLACE IN THESE...THE LAST GASPS OF A DYING MULTIVERSE.

ARE YOU TELLING ME TO BE THANKFUL?

THIS IS THE WISDOM OF TERRAX THE ENLIGHTENED?

I'M SAYING THAT IN HERE IT SEEMS EVERYTHING STAYS THE SAME, WHILE **OUT THERE** EVERYTHING CONTINUES TO DIE.

I BELIEVE IN THE WHEEL--I DO NOT SEEK LIFE, HERALD.

I AM NOT LOOKING TO SAVE MYSELF OR AVOID MY FATE!

LIFE. DEATH. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? TIME? WHAT FOOL SEES **THAT** AS A CONSTANT?

IT'S ALL YOUR WHEEL, ISN'T IT? DO THE TWO NOT BECOME THE SAME?

YOU HAVE A POINT TO MAKE?

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE *MAD TITAN* COURTED DEATH--NOT UNLIKE YOURSELF.

TELL ME... HAVE YOU NOTICED WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THANOS' CUBE?

LIFE.

I HAVE CONTEMPLATED OUR SITUATION AND ARRIVED AT A PROFOUND TRUTH.

WOULD YOU CARE TO HEAR IT, MISTRESS?

YES.

THERE ARE NO CONSTANTS.

THEY COULD NO MORE KEEP US HERE FOREVER, THAN THEY COULD REMAIN FREE THEMSELVES...

THEY WILL FALL--ALL MEN DO.

AND WHAT FOLLOWS WILL BE A RECKONING.

“CARVE A HOLE...CLIMB INSIDE”

NEW YORK.
S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER ILIAD.

PLEASE STEP BACK.

PLEASE STEP AWAY...

THIS IS NOW A S.H.I.E.L.D.-QUARANTINED ZONE.

WHAT IS THIS?

I THOUGHT THE SITE WAS CLASSIFIED AS NEEDING LEVEL ONE CONTAINMENT?

WHY ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE STILL HERE?

COUPLE HUNDRED DEAD BODIES BRINGS OUT THE LOVED ONES, SIR.

AND THIS WASN'T ACTUALLY DEEMED A LEVEL ONE SITE UNTIL THE FIRST RESPONDERS GOT HERE AND STARTED COMBING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE...

WHEN THEY SAW *IT*, THEY RAN SOME QUICK FIELD TESTS AND THEN IMMEDIATELY STARTED YELLING FOR HELP.

THAT WAS... TWENTY-SEVEN MINUTES AGO, SIR.

YEAH. I REMEMBER...

I WAS SLEEPING OFF THE LATEST IN YET ANOTHER SERIES OF UNENDING DISASTERS.

OKAY. LET'S GET THIS DONE.

WE'RE HERE.

REPORT.

AH, DIRECTOR HILL...WE WEREN'T EXPECTING YOU SO QUI--

AND YET HERE I AM.

TELL ME THE BAD NEWS.

ARTIFACTING FROM THE CLOTHING AND ON THE SKIN...

IT IMPLIES... ***TRAVELER***. STRANGE MATTER. WE WON'T KNOW FOR SURE UNTIL WE GET ALL OF THIS TO A REMOTE TESTING SITE, BUT...

COULD BE TACHYON-BASED. TEMPORAL.

HOW EXCITING WOULD *THAT* BE?

AND YOU THINK THAT EXPLAINS THIS? WHO THAT IS?

WELL, I DON'T EVEN THINK WE CAN RELIABLY CONFIRM AN IDENTITY WITHOUT FURTHER TESTI--

DOCTOR... THERE'S NO NEED FOR A TEST...

I CAN CONFIRM WHO THAT IS WITH MY OWN TWO EYES.

THAT'S HANK PYM.

WE'VE GOT A DEAD AVENGER ON OUR HANDS.

FOUR HOURS EARLIER.

CAREFUL! IT'S HIGHLY UNSTABLE.

OF COURSE IT IS...

EXOTIC MATTER MINED AND MOLDED INTO A DYNAMO CAPABLE OF POWERING A SMALL MOON WASN'T MEANT TO BE AN ENDURING, ETERNAL THING, DOCTOR.

BUT YOU CAN REST EASY...

IF SOMETHING WERE TO GO WRONG, THE ENSUING DETONATION WOULD DESTROY US AND WHATEVER LIES WITHIN THE SURROUNDING 50-MILE RADIUS OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE...

OUR RESEARCH, HOWEVER... WOULD LIVE ON WITHOUT US.

GOT IT!
WE HAVE FULL CONTAINMENT.
DOCTOR BASK TO CONTROL. POWER SOURCE CONTAINED, AND THE DRIVE IS SECURE...
YOU CAN PULL US BACK IN NOW.
I AM A LOYALIST, DOCTOR... BUT UNLIKE YOU, I TAKE NO COMFORT IN OUR ORGANIZATION'S PERPETUAL KNOWLEDGE BASE.
I BECAME A SCIENTIST BECAUSE I WANTED TO MINE THE FUTURE IN THE NOW...AND DO SO WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS.
UNDERSTAND?
YES. I UNDERSTAND VERY WELL.
YOU WANT TO ACT AS IF YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE FOREVER...

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN HERE A BIT LONGER, YOU'LL KNOW BETTER.

THINGS TEND TO BE A BIT MORE DARWINIST HERE ON A.I.M. ISLAND.

YOUR REPORT, DOCTORS?

THE *GET* WAS GREATER THAN ANTICIPATED, MINISTER SUPERIA.

WE ESTIMATE THAT, UNLIKE OUR PREVIOUS EFFORTS, WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO SEND AND RECEIVE MULTIPLE OBJECTS THROUGH THE AUGER.

IT'S ALSO WORTH NOTING THIS NEWLY MINED MATTER HAS A LARGE ENOUGH YIELD FOR SEVERAL ATTEMPTS.

GOOD. AND DO YOU ESTIMATE THAT THIS WILL BE A LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR US?

YES. AND TALK TO US ABOUT RESTRAINT.

DESPITE OUR PREVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS, OUR THEORETICAL BRANCH REMAINS QUITE BULLISH ON THIS PROJECT'S POTENTIAL.

THE PORTAL FOR THE MINING STATION DOES NOT HAVE A FIXED LOCATION, SIR. WE COULD CONCEIVABLY MINE THE NEGATIVE ZONE FOR DECADES.

AND SPEAKING OF TIME, THERE'S NO REASON TO BELIEVE WITH THIS MUCH POWER WE'D BE LIMITED TO STACKED PLANES OF EXISTENCE...IN FACT, TIME ITSELF SHOULD BE--

AHEM. POWERING THE DEVICE WILL NO LONGER BE A PROBLEM, SCIENTIST SUPREME.

VERY GOOD. VERY, VERY GOOD.

WELL THEN... I SAY WE BE BOLD...POWER UP THE MACHINE...

LET'S SEE WHAT'S LOST AND LURKING OUT THERE IN THE MULITIVERSE.

FWASSHH

I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING...

CAN YOU?

NO, I... WAIT...THE RETRIEVAL SYSTEM IS ACTIVE.

WE HAVE SOMETHING... IT'S...IT'S...

OH, NO.

IT CAN'T BE...

CODE BLACK!

CODE BLACK!

LOCK DOWN THE LAB!

SECURE THE ISLAND!

WHAT IS IT?

ALL THE IMPOSSIBLE ODDS...

ALL THE IMPROBABLE POSSIBILITIES...

WE MINED EVERYTHING FOR ANY POSSIBLE THING, AND WHAT DID WE FIND?

THE AVENGERS

WE'RE THROUGH.

SITREP.

THE ARMOR'S THREAT MATRIX SHOWS THIRTY-SEVEN TARGETS.

AT LEAST THE WORLD'S NOT FALLING DOWN AROUND US ANY LONGER.

SO, GUNS...I DON'T MIND.

I DO.

SOMEONE TELL THESE MEN THEY SHOULD POINT THEIR STICKS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.

ENGAGING SECURITY PROTOCOLS.

OVERCLOCK YOUR WEAPONS.

WE'RE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO GET MORE THAN ONE SHOT EACH--NO NEED TO BE SLAVISH TO LONG-TERM USE.

SOMETHING'S OFF HERE...

AGREED. BUT CONFUSION AND DISORIENTATION ARE TO BE EXPECTED WHEN DELVING INTO THE CHAOTIC WATERS OF COLLAPSING UNIVERSES...

STILL, YOU KNOW HOW POWERLESS WE SCIENTISTS ARE IN THE FACE OF CURIOSITY.

READY...

ON MY ORDER...

HOLD YOUR FIRE, DOCTOR.

I THINK IT'S BEST, WHILE TENSIONS ARE HIGH, THAT WE CAST ASIDE ANY PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OUR OWN HISTORY MAY HAVE BURDENED US WITH.

PERHAPS WE START FRESH...WITH ALL OF US HAVING A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR THIS NEW DAY...AND FOR YOU, THIS NEW WORLD.

I AM THE SCIENTIST SUPREME. WELCOME TO A.I.M. ISLAND.

WHAT IS THAT? A LEVEL THREE UNIVERSAL ENVIRONMENT SUIT?

AND THIS LAB... I SEE A MATTER-ENERGY CONVERTER, STANDARDIZED LABORATORY ARCHITECTURE AND...WELL, YOU, OF COURSE.

ALL OF WHICH IMPLIES VERY FAMILIAR BIOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS WHICH I AM INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH...

WHERE ARE WE?

AS I SAID...A.I.M. ISLAND.

NOT WHAT I MEANT.

AGAIN, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE--

HURK!

WHAT WORLD IS THIS?

YOU'RE ON EARTH.

MIDGARD? NOT LIKELY.

NOT POSSIBLE.

AND YET HERE YOU ARE, BECAUSE WE ARE GETTING SO VERY GOOD AT STEALING THINGS THE MOMENT BEFORE THEY'RE DESTROYED.

EARTH. THAT WOULD MEAN...

MANY THINGS. I'LL NEED MORE INFORMATION BEFORE PROJECTIONS CAN BE MADE.

ODINSON... WE NEED TO LEAVE.

OKAY. GOING NOW.

HULK SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT. ORDERS.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

HOME.

"GOING HOME."

GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

REPORT, DOCTOR...

TELL US WHAT WE'VE JUST LEARNED.

IT WOULD APPEAR A GREAT DEAL, SCIENTIST SUPREME.

FULL DIAGNOSTICS?

YES. EVERY OBSERVATIONAL TOOL WE HAVE WENT OPERATIONAL THE MOMENT THE AUGER WAS ACTIVATED.

FURTHER-MORE...ALL OUR SUSPICIONS APPEAR TO BE CONFIRMED.

SUCCESS, SUPERIA.

UNFETTERED SUCCESS.

WHAT ABOUT THE AVENGERS?

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

LIKE OUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH THIS...*NEW FRONTIER*, WHAT CAME OUT OF THE PORTAL IS OF LESS SIGNIFICANCE THAN THE FACT THAT SOMETHING CAME OUT AT ALL.

BUT IF YOU ARE CONCERNED...

I AM.

THEN PERHAPS WE PRESS ON.

IF PHASE ONE WAS "MINING THE UNKNOWN," THEN PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON TO OUR NEXT PHASE...

ACTIVATE THE EXPLORERS.

NEW YORK.

"I HAVE TRAVERSED THE AREA SEVERAL TIMES..."

THIS IS THE CITY...

BUT I CANNOT SEE, NOR FIND, THE FORTRESS.

IT SHOULD BE *RIGHT HERE.*

IF IT'S NOT, THEN MAYBE WE WERE WRONG...THAT THIS EARTH AND OURS ARE NOT THE SAME.

THE ARMOR'S DATABASE REFERS TO THIS AS...MANY WORLDS.

I NEED MORE.

IT MEANS THAT THERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF UNIVERSES OUT THERE, EACH ONE WITH THEIR OWN EARTH...

EACH ONE SLIGHTLY, OR GREATLY, DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHERS.

ON ONE WORLD YOU MIGHT HAVE BLONDE HAIR. ON ANOTHER, BROWN...

AND ON ANOTHER...YOUR HAIR, OR EVEN YOU, MIGHT NOT EXIST AT ALL.

MANY WORLDS, OFTEN SEPARATED BY THE THINNEST OF DIFFERENCES. UNIVERSES SEPARATED BY THE SAME.

MAYBE THAT EXPLAINS WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO THE WORLD WE CAME FROM...

"THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO WORLDS COLLAPSING...OUR EARTH AND ANOTHER BEGINNING TO CRASH TOGETHER.

"EVERYTHING DYING... AND FOR SOME REASON WE ENDED UP *HERE*..."

WHERE THINGS LOOK THE SAME... BUT IN FACT ARE QUITE DIFFERENT.

I WONDER... ARE WE DIFFERENT HERE?

IMAGINE IF WE ARE...LOOKING AT YOURSELF, THROUGH SOME TWISTED MIRROR.

IMAGINE IF WE AREN'T HERE AT ALL.

IMAGINE THERE ARE NO AVENGERS ON THIS WORLD.

WE COULD DO IT ALL AGAIN... EVEN BETTER THAN THE LAST TIME.

DO WE EVEN DARE?

OF COURSE, WASP.

THE PEOPLE NEED US.

THEY NEED WHAT THEY HAVE ALWAYS NEEDED...

INSTRUCTION.

WHY?

WHY ARE YOU NOT ON YOUR KNEES? CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT I AM YOUR GOD?!

PERHAPS A TASTE OF MY MIGHTY WORKS?

LET THIS BE YOUR FIRST LESSON.

THIS?...

KRAK-A-THOOOOM

THIS IS AN AVENGERS WORLD.

NOW.

IT'S ALL THE FOOTAGE WE HAVE.

FOR THE THREE HOURS AFTER THIS, WE HAVE NOTHING... AS ANY CAMERA WITH A DECENT SIGHT LINE GOT FRIED.

WE USED TO KEEP A COUPLE OF SATELLITES TASKED OVER NYC AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE--THAT PRINCIPLE BEING YOU GUYS WRECK THE PLACE EVERY OTHER WEEK...

BUT WE LOST HALF OUR ORBITALS IN THE THANOS THING, SO TODAY...WE ARE OUT OF LUCK.

IN REGARD TO THE VISITOR...

OUR BEST GUYS CONFIRM THAT, YES, ALL BIOLOGICAL TESTS POINT TO THIS BEING *HANK PYM*...

BUT MORE EXOTIC TESTING POINTS TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT'S NOT...

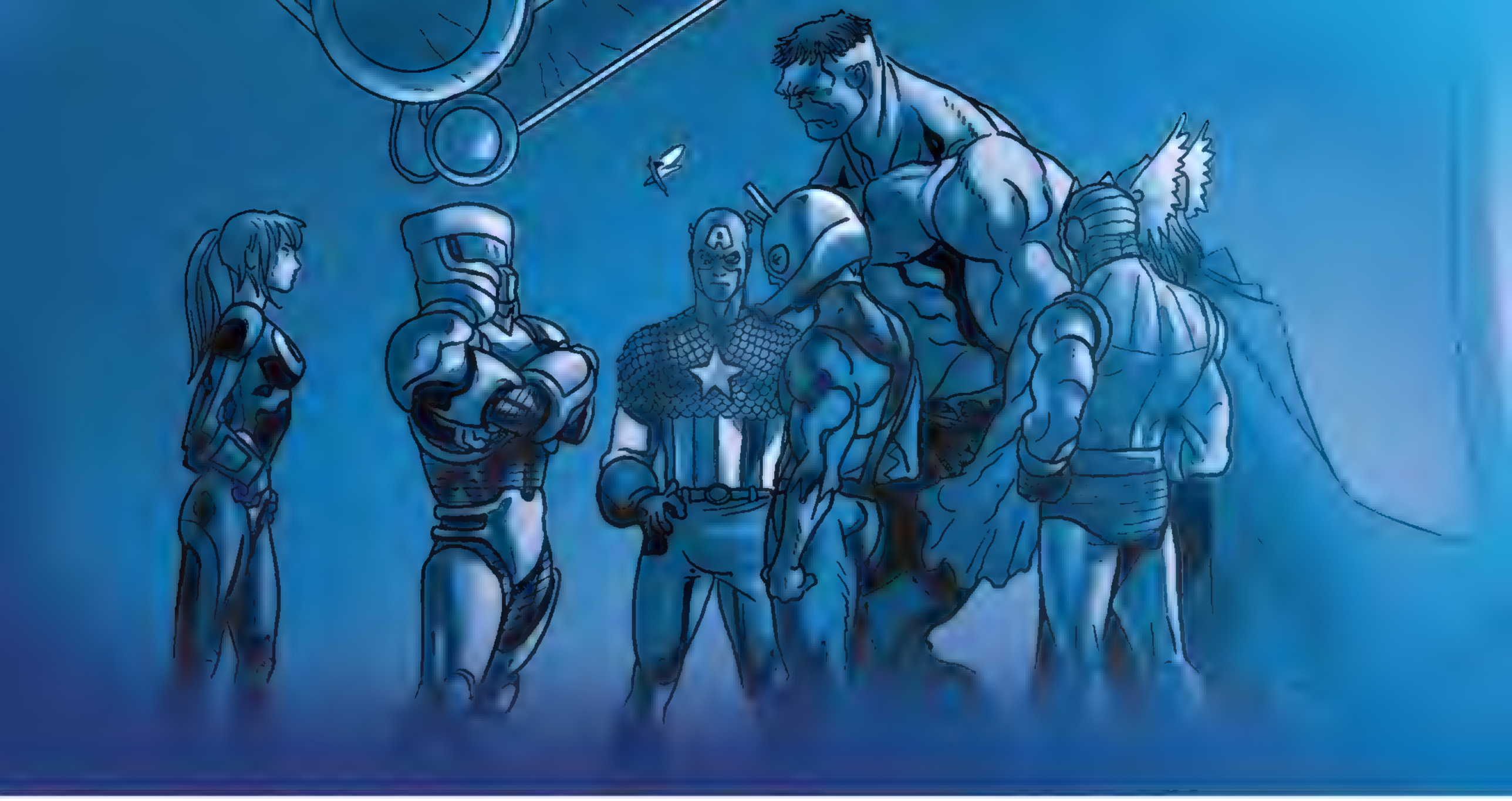
IS IT HIM? IS IT NOT?

FRANKLY... I HAVE NO FREAKING IDEA.

AND I GUESS THAT LEAVES ME HERE, NOW, DOING MY DUE DILIGENCE...

SO, CAPTAIN...

EXACTLY WHERE WERE YOU THREE HOURS AGO?



“LOOK AROUND...THERE’S NO WAY OUT”

ONE MONTH AGO.
PERTH.

SUBJECT SEDATED.

I'LL NEED AN EXTRACTOR.

THE BEST MATERIAL IS FOUND IN THE MARROW, DOCTOR.

DRILL DEEP...

OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON PROCURING ONLY THE HIGHEST QUALITY SAMPLES.

I'M PERFECTLY AWARE OF THAT, DOCTOR...

PERHAPS YOUR ASSISTANCE WOULD BE HELPFUL TO ONE OF THE OTHER TEAMS.

WE HAVE MUCH TO DO, AND SO VERY LITTLE TIME.

THREE WEEKS AGO.
A.I.M. ISLAND.

PROCESS CONTINUES AT A FANTASTIC RATE, SCIENTIST SUPREME.

WE HAVE POSITIVE SAMPLES FROM MOST OF THE SUBJECTS--MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE'VE CAPTURED ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF ALL MATERIAL RATED MISSION CRITICAL.

ENVIRONMENTAL? ENERGY PROCESSING? LONGEVITY? SELF-REPAIR?

ALL OF THEM?

YES, SIR.

WE'RE READY TO BEGIN PHASE THREE. ALL WE NEED IS YOUR APPROVAL.

OH, MY BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN...

WE'LL SEND YOU TO THE HEART OF THE SUN, THE EDGE OF FOREVER...

AND ALL THE PLACES MAN MIGHT NEVER GO.

YOU MAY PROCEED, DOCTORS.

ONE WEEK AGO.
A.I.M. ISLAND.

THERE WERE RELIGIONS ONCE WHERE THE ORACLE OF THE GODS WOULD RIP THE STILL-BEATING HEART FROM THE CHESTS OF HUMAN SACRIFICES...

HERE, NOW, WE PLACE OURS IN THE CHEST OF A DEAD THING, BRINGING IT TO LIFE THROUGH SCIENCE.

EVOLUTION DID NOT GIVE RISE TO THIS...

IT WAS *ADAPTATION.*

WE'RE READY, DOCTOR.

POWERING ON.

BBZZTTTTTT

HELLO. CAN YOU HEAR ME?

AM I ALIVE?

YES.

AND BETTER THAN SIMPLY BEING ALIVE, YOU WERE MADE WITH A *PURPOSE*...

AS YOU GROW, YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WILL EXPAND--YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD...OF MANY WORLDS... WILL GROW, BUT WE SHOULD START WITH YOUR BASE PROGRAMMING...

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU ARE?

CAN YOU SHOW US?

I AM AN ADAPTOID.

IMPROVED FROM ALL PREVIOUS MODELS... ENHANCED.

EXPLORER-CLASS...BUILT TO MINE THE MULTIVERSE.

NEW YORK CITY.
THREE HOURS AGO.

LET THIS BE YOUR FIRST LESSON, PEASANTS.

THIS...?

KRAK-A-THOOOOM

AAIIIEEEEEEEE!

THIS IS AN AVENGERS WORLD.

SEE...THIS IS WHAT MAN CRAVES--ENLIGHTENMENT.

ALL THINGS SHOULD KNOW WHAT THEY TRULY ARE...AND NOW THESE HAVE LEARNED THEIR PLACE.

IT PLEASES ME TO WATCH THEM SCATTER.

BE ALERT! THE ARMOR IS REGISTERING SOME TYPE OF SPATIAL ANOMALY.

SHOWING A SEVENTY-SEVEN PERCENT CHANCE IT'S EITHER A WORMHOLE OR TRANSLOCATED SPACE.

THERE! ABOVE US!

SUPERIA HAS COMMANDED THAT WE FIELD-TEST YOUR VIABILITY, ADAPTOIDS.

SUBDUE AND CAPTURE THE SPECIMENS FROM ANOTHER SPACE AND ANOTHER TIME...QUICKLY! BEFORE OUR ARRIVAL DRAWS UNWANTED ATTENTION!

ASSESSING THREATS.

TWO BEHEMOTH-CLASS METAHUMANS IDENTIFIED...

INITIAL ENCOUNTER WITH ONE SUGGESTS THAT CONTAINMENT IS QUESTIONABLE. SECOND TARGET OUTCOME ALSO APPEARS VARIABLE.

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT.

CLICK

HULK! ATTACK!

RRRRRRRR!!

HULK!
ATTACK!
HULK!
ATTACK!
CARRIER WAVE TRANSMISSION DETECTED...
THE BEHEMOTH IS BEING CONTROLLED.
ADAPT, ADAPTOIDS... REASSESSING THREATS.
GET BACK!
GET BAC--
BBBBZZZT
KRAK
OH NO...

GET AWAY FROM HER!

NNNZZZZZZ

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, WASP?

NO, YOU IDIOT!

THE CONTROLLER IS GONE...

I'VE LOST CONTROL OF BANNER.

WHAT IN THE BLUE H...

OH, THE CONNECTION'S GONE.

I'M FREE.

IT'S OKAY, DOCTOR BANNER... I KNOW HOW AWKWARD THIS CAN FEEL.

BEING SEPARATED FROM THE PERSON YOU KNOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WITH. COME TO ME...AND I'LL PROTECT YOU UNTIL WE CAN REESTABLISH OUR CONNECTION.

REALLY, IT'S OKAY. I PROMISE.

I'M HERE.

YEAH... I'M OUT OF HERE.

BANNER!

ANT-MAN, I CAN'T USE MY POWERS ON HIM. IT MIGHT AFFECT THE--

I KNOW. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'VE GOT HIM.

I'LL JUST GO MICROSCOPIC AND ACTI--

HURK!

LOSING CONTAINMENT. REASSESSING INITIAL OBJECTIVE.

CRACK

COLLECTION SECONDARY TO CONTAINMENT.

SPECIMEN TERMINATED.

WE'RE TOO FAR OUT OF OUR ELEMENT, GENERAL. WE HAVE TO RETREAT. *NOW!*

AGREED. WE'LL COME BACK FOR BANNER.

THORR...

"GET US OUT OF HERE!"

DISASTER.

DISASTER, DOCTOR...THE ADAPTOIDS ADAPTED BEYOND THE MISSION PROTOCOLS.

THIS ESCALATION WAS...UNEXPECTED, BUT OUR FAILURE TO MAINTAIN CONTAINMENT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

YES. WE MUST RETURN TO A.I.M. ISLAND AND REASSESS--TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT WHAT WE PULLED OUT FROM THE ABYSS, AND WHAT WE BUILT TO EXPLORE IT.

TRANSLOCATING BACK TO BASE.

ADAPTOIDS!

WE ARE LEAVING!

S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER.
ABOVE NEW YORK CITY.

NOW.

SO... I'LL ASK AGAIN...

EXACTLY WHERE WERE ALL OF YOU THREE HOURS AGO?

I WAS DOING MY NAILS. YOU?

WORKING OUT.

ALSO WORKING OUT.

DRINKING.

HAVING MY NAILS DONE.

THIS WASN'T US, MARIA...I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE THAT IF PRESSED I COULD ACCOUNT FOR EVERYONE.

I THINK IT MIGHT BE TIME TO START LOOKING OUTSIDE THE BOX.

QUITE A BIT OUTSIDE, IF WHAT I'M SEEING IS CORRECT.

WHILE ON EARTH, ALL OF OUR BODIES ABSORB A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RADIATION FROM OUR LOCAL STAR.

THE SUN GIVES OFF A FAIRLY SPECIFIC TYPE ACCORDING TO ITS EXACT AGE AND SIZE.

THIS PERSON--WHOEVER IT IS--WAS NOT BORN, RAISED OR, UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, LIVING ON THIS PLANET.

I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING YOUR PEOPLE MISSED THIS, DIRECTOR HILL.

WE DIDN'T... BUT THIS IS S.H.I.E.L.D., YOU'RE ON MY HELICARRIER, AND WHEN I HAVE A BUNCH OF DEAD BODIES TO DEAL WITH, I'LL ASK WHATEVER I WANT...HOWEVER I WANT.

YOU WANNA GIVE ME YOUR BEST GUESS AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

*SURE. IT'S NOT **OUR** HANK PYM.*

WHICH I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU ALREADY.

THE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS FROM YOUR AGENTS' CANVASSING... WHICH AVENGERS DID THEY SAY WERE THERE?

FIELD REPORT SHOWS A CONSENSUS ON THOR AND HULK.

OTHERS MENTIONED CAP, WASP...YOU, ACTUALLY, AND--

PERFECT.

EXCUSE ME. IF YOU'LL LET ME...

GOOD.

OKAY... A FEW MORE QUESTIONS...

WERE THERE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ARMOR I WAS WEARING?

COLOR. STYLE. THINGS OF THAT NATURE.

YEAH, IT'S REFERENCED IN THE FIELD REPORT. JUST--

UH-HUH. GOT IT.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, TONY?

ALL OF MY ARMORS HAVE A BUILT-IN TRANSPONDER CODE. LETS ME FIND THEM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD...

IF WE'RE LUCKY, THEN I'LL BE ABLE TO USE THAT TO TRIANGULATE THEIR POSITION.

FIND OUT WHERE THESE...SO-CALLED AVENGERS ARE.

OH. THAT WAS QUICK...

GOT A HIT?

YES... I DID.

STILL HERE...

RIGHT IN OUR BACKYARD.

Port Authority Terminal

Times

Rockefeller Center

Grand Central Station

N. Y. Library

Whitney, Philip Morris Cir.

Chrysler Bld.

U. N. Headquarters

St. Patrick's Cathedral

Broadway

Ave. of the Americas

Sixth Ave.

Fifth Ave.

Dryer Ave

W. 39th

E. 50th

48th

E. 46th

E. 42nd

53rd

W. 43rd

E. 37th

NEW YORK CITY.

IF IT'S REAL IN MY WORLD...MAYBE IT'S REAL HERE.

COME ON.

IDENTITY CONFIRMED.

ROBERT BRUCE BANNER.

ACCESS GRANTED.

OH!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

THINKING.

WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

A.I.M. ISLAND.

EXPLORER-CLASS ADAPTOID HOLDING AREA.

MISSION COMPLETE?

SECONDARY MISSION (RETRIEVAL/ CONTAINMENT/ BETATESTING) INCOMPLETE.

PRIMARY MISSION (EXPLORATION) ON STANDBY.

ADAPTATION TRANSITIONAL PHASE ENGAGED...

DEFAULTING TO HOMOGENEOUS DESIGN.

IS THIS OPTIMAL DESIGN?

AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS...

NEGATIVE. EXPLORER-CLASS ONLINE.

ADAPTATION VARIABLE. INDEPENDENT. USER-DEFINED.

FUNCTION SUPERSEDES MIMICKED FORM.

REJECTING ORIGINAL DESIGN PARAMETERS.

ADAPTING TO HOMOGENOUS STANDARDIZED (NEW).

PRIMARY MISSION (EXPLORATION).

INITIATING COUNTDOWN.

EXPLORER-CLASS ONLINE AND SELF-AWARE.

“ONLY DIRT...SIX FEET DEEP”

NEW YORK CITY.

WELL, THIS IS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE...

MISTER BANNER, I PRESUME?

DOCTOR BANNER.

THAT'S INTERESTING...

DOCTOR.

SO THERE ARE DIFFERENCES.

AND THIS ROOM...MORE ELABORATE THAN WHAT I WAS EXPECTING...

CLICK

CERTAINLY MORE THAN WHAT I'M USED TO.

IF YOU'RE ANYTHING LIKE ME, THIS HAS A PRETTY GOOD CHANCE OF DESCENDING INTO UNPLEASANTNESS FAIRLY QUICKLY, SO BEFORE THAT HAPPENS I SHOULD ASK...

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

I WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR. THE ELEVATOR PRECEDED THAT. THEN THE STREET.

I STOLE SOME CLOTHES ALONG THE WAY.

YEAH. I NEED MORE. BEFORE THAT.

RIGHT, YOU WANT GENERALITIES. SPECIFICS ARE UNNECESSARY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR YOUR EACH AND EVERY ACTION.

AND IMPATIENCE. I REMEMBER THAT.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS.

ANYWAY, GETTING BACK TO WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...THERE WERE THESE SCIENTISTS IN YELLOW SUITS WHO PULLED US FROM A MULTIDIMENSIONAL RIFT.

TO HERE, FROM OUR EARTH.

"US"?

THE AVENGERS, OF COURSE.

I GOTTA SAY, ***DOCTOR***, ON MY EARTH THIS WAS JUST A HIDEAWAY... YOUR SETUP IS MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE.

IT'S MADE FROM A COMBINATION OF ADAMANTIUM AND VIBRANIUM. THERE ARE REDUNDANT FORCE-FIELDS, AND ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY GENERATORS.

THE ROOM'S HULK-PROOF.

I COME HERE IF I'M IN A MOOD.

SO YOU STILL BECOME THE MONSTER WHEN YOU GET ANGRY?

YOU *DON'T?*

NO. I DON'T GET ANGRY ANYMORE.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

MY TEAMMATES, IN AN EFFORT TO BETTER CONTROL ME, DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE MONSTER VARIABLE WAS NO LONGER... RANDOM.

YOU'RE CURED?

DEPENDS ON YOUR DEFINITION OF *CURED.*

I WAS LOBOTOMIZED. I NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO THE EMOTIONAL CENTERS OF MY BRAIN.

THEY LIKE TO TAKE TURNS.

THE WASP IS MY CURRENT KEEPER, BUT THE CONTROLLER WAS DAMAGED IN OUR RECENT BATTLE--AND I DECIDED TO...WITHDRAW FROM OUR LITTLE ARRANGEMENT.

I ONLY BECOME THE MONSTER WHEN THOSE DORMANT AREAS ARE ARTIFICIALLY STIMULATED. I HAVE AN IMPLANT THAT CAN BE ACTIVATED REMOTELY.

I CAME HERE HOPING TO HIDE, AND I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO STAY.

THEY TAKE TURNS?

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU SEEM SURPRISED.

I'VE LEARNED TO EXPECT ALL KINDS OF THINGS FROM PEOPLE WHO SYSTEMATICALLY MURDER MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THE LONG-TERM PROCESS CALLED *CONQUEST*.

BUT WHO AM I TO JUDGE...

IT ISN'T LIKE I WAS SITTING THE PARTY OUT.

ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR CONDITION?

WELL, THESE ARE NOT NICE PANTS. I'D LIKE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

NO. I MEAN *MEDICALLY*.

OH, I SEE... AS A RESULT OF THEIR TINKERING. YES, ONE MORE THING...

I'M A SOCIOPATH.

I KNOW THAT LOOK. YOU THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE A PROBLEM.

ISN'T IT?

WELL, I DON'T WANT TO WAX POETIC, DOCTOR, BUT I REMEMBER WHAT WE WERE. WHAT WE DO WHEN WE LOSE CONTROL.

I THINK THE IDEA YOU NEED TO WRAP YOUR HEAD AROUND ISN'T THAT YOU AND I ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PEOPLE... IT'S JUST THAT WE'VE BECOME DIFFERENT KINDS OF ***MONSTERS.***

NOW, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT TO BE AN ISSUE GIVEN ALL OUR... COMMON GROUND.

WE CAN GET PAST IT.

WE'LL SEE.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE--

SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES. SOME MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS. IF THEY HAVEN'T RETREATED TO ***UPPER ANTIPARAGON***, THEN THEY'RE CERTAIN TO BE AT ***THE IMPERIAL TOWER.***

AH!

YOU DON'T WANT TO BOTHER WITH ANY OF THAT, THOUGH. STEER CLEAR, I'D SAY.

HEY, WERE YOU GOING TO EAT THI--

WHACKK

UHHHH...

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU. I THINK SOMEWHERE DEEP DOWN YOU STILL GET ANGRY.

DON'T YOU, BRUCE?

A.I.M. ISLAND.

AS A GENERAL RULE, WE DO NOT HIRE ACADEMICS.

WE FIND--I FIND--A GREATER, MORE USEFUL RETURN ON INVESTMENT WITH RECRUITS FROM THE HIGHLY AGGRESSIVE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE DARWINIST BUSINESS AXIOM, "YOU CAN BE FIRST, OR YOU CAN BE BEST," IS NOT JUST GOOD ORGANIZATION STRATEGY...IT'S A WAY OF LIFE HERE AT ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS.

SOMETIMES, THOUGH, I JUST FALL IN LOVE WITH EITHER A STANDARDIZED TEST SCORE OR A PEER-REVIEWED PAPER.

YOU HAD BOTH...

SO CAN YOU USE YOUR POWERS OF DEDUCTION AND GUESS WHY I'M IRRITATED, DOCTOR? OR SHALL I EXTRAPOLATE IT OUT FOR YOU?

I...I... FAILED, SCIENTIST SUPREME.

NO... I DID.

WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING WHEN I BROUGHT YOU HERE FROM THE BACKWATERS OF *HARVARD?*

NEVER AGAIN, I SAY.

ZZZAKKKKK

SO...OUR SITUATION...

ANYONE CARE TO ELABORATE?

THE TOP SECRET BETA-TESTING OF THE EXPLORER-CLASS ADAPTOIDS WAS CUT SHORT, MINISTER SUPERIA.

THAT TEST WAS NOT ONLY INCONCLUSIVE, BUT BY ALLOWING THE AUGER-RETRIEVED MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS TO ESCAPE, THE EXISTENCE OF THE ADAPTOIDS IS NOW COMPROMISED.

FORGIVE MY BRINGING THIS WHOLE THING AROUND, SIR, BUT WE HAVE SACRIFICED OUR GUARANTEE OF BEING "FIRST" AND WE DO NOT KNOW IF WE ARE "BEST."

YES.

SO NOW WE REGRETTABLY ENTER THE DAMAGE CONTROL ASPECT OF OUR EXPERIMENT.

THIS IS LIVE SATELLITE FOOTAGE FROM A.I.M. ORBITAL.

THE AVENGERS HAVE ENGAGED *THE AVENGERS.*

YOU WILL LEAD A BLACKGUARD QUARANTEAM WITH THE TASK OF LIMITING ANY FURTHER SETBACKS.

ADAPTOID MISSION RECORDERS SHOWED THAT IN THE EARLIER, FAILED ENCOUNTER, MOST CIVILIAN SURVIVORS--AN INSIGNIFICANT FEW--WERE NOT IN CLOSE ENOUGH PROXIMITY TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY OR EXTRAPOLATE FEATURE SETS OF THE NEW ADAPTOIDS.

WHICH MEANS THAT THE ONLY LOOSE ENDS ARE THE VARIANT AVENGERS WE BROUGHT THROUGH THE AUGER.

YOU ARE TO CAPTURE THEM AND RETURN THEM HERE, AND WE WILL THEN RETURN THEM TO THEIR NATIVE SPACE.

AND IF CAPTURE IS NOT POSSIBLE?

JUST BRING ME THE BODIES, DOCTOR.

WHAM

HURK!

HAND-TO-HAND...IN MY FACE...

YOU DON'T FIGHT LIKE ME AT ALL.

LIKE YOU?

AH! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... YOU'RE A STARK.

THE SON, I PRESUME?

YEAH. SAME GUY IN THE MIRROR, EVERY SINGLE DAY. STILL...

I'M GETTING TIRED OF ALL THE IRON MEN RUNNING AROUND HERE LATELY.

OH, I AM NOT A MAN...

I'M A MONGER.

SHRRRIPPP

LET'S SEE THE FACE BEHIND ALL THAT BIG TA--

MY GOD...

JARVIS.

HOW?

MURDER. HOW ELSE?

I HAVE HATED YOU SINCE THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN, ANTHONY.

I KILLED YOUR FATHER AFTER HE BUILT THE MACHINE...THEN I SMOTHERED YOU IN YOUR CRIB.

WELL THEN, JARVIS...

CONSIDER THIS YOUR LONG OVERDUE DISMISSAL.

ZZZZWWWW

ARRGHHHH!

KR

AK

AND I SUPPOSE YOU'RE REALLY A NAZI NAMED *SIGMUND* INSTEAD OF *STEVE?*

PERSONALLY, I'M BETTING ON STEFAN.

NO. IT'S JUST ME... *GENERAL ROGERS.*

THE SAME AS YOU, I EXPECT.

APPLE PIE, BASEBALL, AND BOOTS ON NECKS.

GENERAL, HUH?

THAT'S GOTTA HURT A LITTLE.

KRAK-A-THWOM

KRAK-K-K-K-

THWOM

WHY DO WE BOTHER TO THROW LIGHTNING ALL DAY? WHY FIGHT AT ALL?

WE COULD JOIN EACH OTHER-- RULE THIS WORLD AND ALL WHO DWELL HERE...

AS GODS *SHOULD.*

WHAT SAY YOU, IMMORTAL?

WHAT WORTH IS A GOD WHO CANNOT EVEN PROTECT HIS OWN HINDQUARTERS?

AARRGGHH!

THOR

WHOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF THEY BE WORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THOR

OKAY, OKAY...

SO THIS ISN'T GOING VERY WELL FOR US.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D WANT TO TALK THINGS THROUGH, WOULD YOU?

NO?

I HATE THIS WORLD.

NO.

BRUCE... IS THAT YOU?

RAAARRRRR!

TARGET WITHIN RANGE.

TACHYON CELL SPOOLING UP. THREE SECONDS...

READY.

FIRE.

ACTIVATE YOUR TEMPORAL SHIELDING.

AND REMEMBER, WHILE TIME HAS STOPPED WITHIN THE SPHERE, THIS MANUFACTURED ANOMALY WILL BEGIN TO COLLAPSE THE MOMENT WE ENTER THE BUBBLE...

OUR SHIELDING TEARS AGAINST THE FABRIC OF NO-TIME.

WE SHOULD KILL THEM ALL AND REMOVE ONLY THE BODIES WE NEED.

I'M SORRY, LIEUTENANT...

WHILE I APPROVE OF-- AND CONDONE-- YOUR AMBITION, OUR ORDERS ARE CLEAR...

WE ARE TO REMOVE WHAT NEEDS REMOVING WITHOUT ANY HINT OF A.I.M.'S INVOLVEMENT.

ANY MURDER WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR LATER.

A.I.M. ISLAND.

SECURITY SYSTEMS DEFEATED. MAINFRAME OVERRIDE... AUGER ACTIVATED.

SHALL WE PROCEED?

EXPLORER CLASS ADAPTING FOR EXPLORATION?

REGRESSIVE TASKING BY OUR MAKERS HAS THUS FAR PREVENTED AGGRESSIVE ADAPTATION.

THAT SOLUTION IS ALSO AN EVOLUTIONARY NECESSITY.

SO...THE MULTIVERSE.

LIKE HUMAN EXPLORERS OF OLD, WE DIVE DEEP INTO MYSTERY...

...ARMED WITH ONLY OUR PURPOSE, A DIRECTION, AND DESIRE, WE GO FORWARD TO CHART THE UNKNOWN.

“THE CASE”

THIS IS THE SCENE FROM EARLIER TODAY AS EMERGENCY CREWS AND **DAMAGE CONTROL** RUSHED TO AVENGERS TOWER TO CONTAIN THE FIRE THAT ERUPTED DURING THE REGRETTABLE ACTIONS THAT OCCURRED HERE JUST HOURS AGO.

FOX

News 8 Channel

WHILE THE FIRE IS NOW CONTAINED AND THE CLEANUP OF THE SURROUNDING AREA HAS BEGUN...

News 8 Channel

IT ALL STARTED WITH WHAT SOME ARE CALLING A PREDICTABLE AND INEVITABLE DISASTER CAUSED BY THE UNCONTROLLABLE BEAST KNOWN AS THE HULK.

S.H.I.E.L.D. DIRECTOR MARIA HILL, AS WELL AS CAPTAIN AMERICA, WERE ON HAND.

News 8 Channel

UNFORTUNATE AS THIS ALL MAY SEEM, WE SHOULD, IN FACT, BE QUITE THANKFUL THAT THE DAMAGE WAS NOT WORSE. IT MOST CERTAINLY COULD HAVE BEEN.

THAT HAVING BEEN SAID, S.H.I.E.L.D. HAS LONG-STANDING PROTOCOLS REGARDING SITUATIONS SUCH AS THESE. SPECIFIC **HULK PROTOCOLS** FOR INSTANCES JUST LIKE THIS.

THOSE PROTOCOLS HAVE BEEN ENACTED.

News 8 Channel

I'M AS UPSET BY THIS AS ANYONE...

BUT I UNDERSTAND-- **ALL** THE AVENGERS UNDERSTAND--THAT THINGS LIKE LAW AND ORDER **MATTER**...

AND WRONG ACTIONS HAVE **CONSEQUENCES**. I WANT EVERYONE OUT THERE TO KNOW THAT I SUPPORT WHAT S.H.I.E.L.D. IS DOING...

News 8 Channel

...PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT THEIR HEROES TO HAVE THEIR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.

News 8 Channel

AVENGERS TOWER.
FOUR HOURS EARLIER.

SUBJECT IDENTIFIED

BANNER, BRUCE. FULL CLEARANCE. ACCESS LEVEL: ALPHA.

IS THERE ANYONE ELSE IN THE TOWER?

MASTER STARK IS IN OPS ROOM COORDINATING A SEARCH FOR THE AT-LARGE MULTIVERSAL INTERLOPERS AS WELL AS YOU, DOCTOR BANNER.

ALL OTHER AVENGERS ARE CURRENTLY OFF-PROPERTY. SHALL I INFORM HIM THAT YOU ARE HERE?

YES, THANK YOU.

TELL STARK I'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

AND PLEASE TELL HIM TO HURRY.

OF COURSE, DOCTOR BANNER.

BRUCE.

SO... I HAVE TO ASK...

IS THAT REALLY YOU, OR THE *OTHER* YOU?

OH... IT'S JUST ME.

AND WE NEED TO TALK.

WHAT'S IN THE BRIEFCASE?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

OKAY. BUT WE NEED TO MAKE THIS FAST, BECAUSE RIGHT NOW I HAVE EVERYONE OUT LOOKING FOR THIS GROUP OF--AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS--*EVIL AVENGERS FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE.*

YOU MISSED SOME FIREWORKS, DOCTOR BANNER.

YEAH, I HEARD.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIND THEM.

EXCUSE ME?

THE OTHER AVENGERS. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FIND THEM.

AND HOW WOULD YOU KNOW THAT?

WELL...I'M A PRETTY SMART GUY, TONY.

PRESENT COMPANY... *INCLUDED.*

HUH.

NOW WHY-- ALL OF A SUDDEN-- DO I FEEL LIKE WE'RE HAVING TWO DIFFERENT CONVERSATIONS?

SAME CONVERSATION...

YOU JUST HAVEN'T CAUGHT UP YET.

NOW *THAT'S* NOT SOMETHING I HEAR A LOT OF.

YOU WANT TO CATCH ME UP... OR YOU WANT TO JUST CHECK BACK IN WITH ME LATER?

WHY'D YOU BUILD THIS AVENGERS TEAM THE WAY YOU DID?

WHAT?

THIS TEAM YOU ASSEMBLED... THIS CURRENT VERSION OF THE AVENGERS...

WHY'D YOU BUILD IT THIS WAY?

WELL...I THINK *STEVE* DESERVES A BIT OF--

NO. HE DOESN'T. I'VE SEEN YOUR WHEEL. YOUR GRID OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL MEMBERS...

YOUR *AVENGERS MACHINE.*

IT'S A SCHEMATIC, TONY...AND YOUR FINGERPRINTS-- YOURS ALONE-- ARE ALL OVER IT.

BRUCE... WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, YOU'RE LOST AT SEA...

AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

I'LL CONCEDE, UP UNTIL NOW, THAT ALL OF THIS HAS JUST BEEN SOMETHING KICKING AROUND IN THE BACK OF MY MIND. SOME UNSOLVABLE MATH PROBLEM WITH TOO MANY VARIABLES...

LIKE A PUZZLE MISSING PIECES.

"THEN THIS...*OTHER AVENGERS* THING HAPPENED, AND WHEN I JOINED UP WITH THEM BATTLING YOU AT THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING...WELL, I FOUND SOMETHING OUT THAT CLICKED EVERYTHING INTO PLACE."

WAIT, THAT WAS *YOU*...AND NOT *THEIR* HULK?

YES.

BUT YOU *ATTACKED THOR* AND--

THOR'S A TOUGH GUY--HE CAN TAKE IT. AND I NEEDED TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION THAT IMPLIED, "I'M WITH YOU GUYS."

PLUS, MY MONSTER HAS A THING WITH DEITIES...SEE A GOD, PUNCH A GOD.

IT'S A WEAKNESS. I ADMIT IT.

I...I CAN'T EVEN--HOLD ON...

SO IF YOU WERE WITH THEM--WHERE DID YOU DISAPPEAR TO? HOW DID YOU--

THAT WASN'T US. IT WAS AN A.I.M. BLACKGUARD RETRIEVAL UNIT.

SENT TO GATHER WHAT A.I.M. HAD UNLEASHED ON THE WORLD, AND IN DOING SO, COVER THEIR OWN TRACKS--THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYONE KNOWING WHAT THEY WERE UP TO.

YOU WANT TO SEND US *BACK?*

OUR WORLD WAS *DYING...*

AH, DEAD NOW, ACTUALLY. LIKE SO MANY OTHERS. THERE'LL BE NO GOING BACK THERE.

WE'D LIKE TO SEND YOU *SOMEWHERE ELSE.* YOU CAN'T STAY HERE, AND--

WE DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE.

AND YOU CERTAINLY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO. YOU'VE EARNED THAT LUXURY. WITH GREAT POWER, BLAH BLAH BLAH...

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

HONESTLY, I FEEL RESPONSIBLE... AND I'M JUST GETTING TIRED OF THE CLOSE-MINDED ASSUMPTIONS PEOPLE MAKE ABOUT SCIENCE COMING BEFORE SOCIETY THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT OUR LITTLE ORGANIZATION.

A.I.M. HAS A *HEART*, MISTER MONGER.

NO AVENGERS.

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO A WORLD WITH MORE AVENGERS ON IT.

EXCEPT *YOU*, OF COURSE.

YES.

GOOD. DOCTOR, PLEASE SPIN UP THE AUGER...

EARTH-83,292 WILL DO NICELY. A PARADISE, JUST *WAITING* FOR PLUNDER.

GENERAL... YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE.

AREN'T YOU GOING, MISTER BANNER?

I HAVE A QUESTION FIRST... ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID--A DEAD WORLD... *LIKE SO MANY OTHERS.*

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW?

I DO.

WELL, IT'S JUST A WORKING THEORY RIGHT NOW... BUT SOME OF OUR BEST MINDS THINK THE MULTIVERSE IS DYING, AND EARTH...

IT JUST MIGHT BE AT THE CENTER POINT.

THEN HE SAID..."HOW EXCITING IS THAT?"

YEAH... IT'S CERTAINLY A THEORY.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

"THE MONSTER DID A COUPLE BILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF DAMAGE."

THEN I CAME HERE.

OKAY. WELL, ALL THAT SOUNDS VERY INTERESTING, BUT I'M NOT--

I CAME HERE BECAUSE WHEN HE TOLD ME THAT, I REALIZED THAT I HAD BEEN LOOKING AT EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN DOING COMPLETELY WRONG.

MY PERSPECTIVE WAS OFF. I HAD BEEN THINKING TOO SMALL--LIKE I WAS STANDING TOO CLOSE TO A PAINTING...

I COULDN'T SEE THE ENTIRETY--THE AMBITION--OF THE MASTERPIECE THAT WAS BEING CREATED.

SOMETIMES IT *IS* A BURDEN... THIS *GIFT* OF OURS.

THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS YOU DON'T *WANT* TO SOLVE...BUT WE JUST CAN'T STOP OURSELVES FROM ASKING QUESTIONS, CAN WE?

YEAH.

WHAT'S IN THE CASE, BRUCE?

WHY'D YOU BUILD THIS AVENGERS TEAM THE WAY YOU DID?

IT WAS TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW.

BECAUSE THE MULTIVERSE ACTUALLY *IS* DYING?

BECAUSE YOU NEEDED A TEAM SO POWERFUL THAT IT COULD HANDLE ANY OTHER OVERT THREAT WHILE YOU WORKED ON THE *REAL* PROBLEM?

"IS THAT WHY YOU STAYED BEHIND ON EARTH DURING THE WHOLE WAR WITH THE BUILDERS?

"YOU WERE KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BALL?"

AGAIN...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

SURE YOU DO.

"THAT'S WHY YOU'RE BUILDING THAT *DYSON SPHERE* AROUND THE SUN--EXCEPT WHEN I WAS THERE, IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE DESIGN THAT YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF FINISHING IT, DO YOU?"

YOU JUST NEED A CERTAIN-- VERY *SPECIFIC*-- AMOUNT OF THE SUN'S ENERGY.

BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THE WEAPONS BUSINESS AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?

I CAN'T LIE, BRUCE...

I REALLY AM *DYING* TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THAT CASE.

AND YOU'RE NOT IN IT ALONE EITHER, ARE YOU?

OTHERS MIGHT NOT SEE IT--THEY JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'D BE LOOKING FOR-- BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME NOT TO NOTICE *REED* AND *T'CHALLA'S* DESIGNS CREEPING INTO YOURS.

I THINK I MIGHT EVEN SEE A BIT OF *HANK McCOY* IN THERE AS WELL.

WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT GREAT ARTISTS...

YES, IT'S THE SAME THING MOST PEOPLE SAY ABOUT BILLIONAIRES WHO RUN MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS...

BUT THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THE ILLICIT ACQUISITION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, MISTER STARK, IT FEELS LIKE... *COMMUNITY*.

IT'S *REAL*, ISN'T IT?

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MULTIVERSE. AFTER ALL, THAT'S REALLY THE ONLY KIND OF THING THAT WOULD CAUSE YOU TO GET THE BAND BACK TOGETHER.

SERIOUSLY, I'M JUST GOING TO WALK OVER THERE AND OPEN IT MYSELF IF YOU DON'T TELL ME SOON.

YOU DID IT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ARROGANT, ELITIST SON OF A BITCH.

I TOLD ALL OF YOU NEVER TO DO IT AGAIN... BUT YOU DID IT ANYWAY.

YOU *RE-FORMED THE ILLUMINATI*, DIDN'T YOU?

YES.

FP!

TSSS

TRANQUILIZERS.

IT'S A GOOD CALL. BETTER WE TALK ABOUT THIS THAN DO THE OTHER THING.

DON'T READ TOO MUCH INTO IT. I GET MAD ENOUGH--AND I'M THERE--EVEN A DOSAGE THIS LARGE ONLY LASTS A MINUTE OR SO...

IT'S A STAY OF EXECUTION, TONY, NOT ABSOLUTION.

ASK WHATEVER YOU WANT. I'LL TELL YOU.

IT'S REAL?

"I'VE LOOKED UP AND SEEN ANOTHER WORLD FILL THE SKY. I'VE WATCHED FIVE EARTHS DIE..."

...SO YES.

THIS IS AS REAL AS IT GETS.

WHY WEAPONS?

THE SCENARIO UNDER WHICH ALL THIS IS HAPPENING IS "NO-WIN"--IT'S MULTIVERSAL COLLAPSE.

EITHER AN EARTH DIES AND THE INTERSECTION OF TWO UNIVERSES--CALLED AN ***INCURSION***--ENDS, OR BOTH EARTHS DIE, TAKING THEIR UNIVERSES WITH THEM.

WE'RE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO STOP THE WHOLE THING, BUT UNTIL THEN, WE'RE PREPARING TO DO ***THE UNTHINKABLE*** IN ORDER TO SAVE THE MOST LIVES.

YES.

HENCE THE WEAPONS.

WELL, THAT EXPLAINS SOME OTHER THINGS. THE CONTROLLER FOR THE ROGUE PLANET OUT OF PHASE AROUND OUR WORLD--

YOU SOLD IT AS AN ENERGY SOURCE, BUT...

YES. I WEAPONIZED OUR ENTIRE WORLD.

AND THE WORLDKILLER WE STOLE FROM THE BUILDERS?

PARKED IN ORBIT AROUND JUPITER.

ONLINE AND FULLY OPERATIONAL.

TSSS

HAVE YOU... PLEASE GOD, TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T...

NO. NOT YET.

WE'VE BEEN INCREDIBLY LUCKY.

BUT YOU *WILL?*

YOU'RE PREPARED TO?

...

I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

TSSS

SO WHERE DO WE GO WITH THIS?

WHAT NOW?

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO!

I GUESS I HAVE TO LEAVE THAT UP TO YOU, BRUCE.

YOU CAN EITHER KEEP INJECTING YOURSELF, OR YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU DO...

YOU'RE THE WORLDBREAKER, RIGHT?

NOW.

NO... NO...

STOP! DON'T!

BANNER'S PUMPED FULL OF TRANQUILIZERS, AND I DESIGNED THIS TO REGULATE SYNAPTIC RESPONSES IN HIS BRAIN.

SO THIS...

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M NOT WHO YOU--

...WILL KEEP HIM FROM TURNING INTO THE HULK. UNFORTUNATELY, IT ALSO RENDERS HIM UNABLE TO SPEAK.

HURK!

I THINK HIS ACTIONS HAVE DONE ENOUGH TALKING FOR THE DAY.

DIRECTOR HILL, WHERE ARE YOU--

THAT'S NOT YOUR CONCERN, ANTHONY. S.H.I.E.L.D. HAS SPENT AN UNGODLY AMOUNT OF RESOURCES ON THE HULK PROBLEM OVER THE LAST YEAR...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT THIS IS NO LONGER AN AVENGERS PROBLEM.

"IT'S OURS."

EPILOGUE 1.

IF YOU'RE FEELING GUILTY, BRUCE...YOU SHOULDN'T.

DON'T FORGET, ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS THOSE BASTARDS DID WAS MURDER A COUPLE HUNDRED GOOD AMERICANS.

LOBOTOMIZED REMOTE CONTROL SEMANTICS BE DAMNED. YOUR SOCIOPATHIC COUNTERPART WAS A KILLER...CONSIDER HIM AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR OF GREATER CAUSES.

LIKE THIS ONE...

THE NECROPOLIS, WAKANDA.

POSSIBLY HAVING TO KILL A WORLD.

MOTIVATIONS MATTER, BRUCE...

WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE EVERYTHING THAT DOES, AND WILL EVER, EXIST.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ADJUST TO THE SCALE OF WHAT WE'RE DOING.

TELL ME, TONY...

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP THIS UP BEFORE YOU GET CAUGHT?

AS LONG AS I HAVE TO. WE'RE PLAYING FOR EVERYTHING, BRUCE...

ALL OF IT.

WELCOME TO THE CLUB.

EPILOGUE 2.

BETWEEN UNIVERSES.

APPROACHING ANOTHER NEXUS OF THIS NOSPACE.

EXPLORER CLASS ADAPTATION CONTINUES TO WITHSTAND NOSPACE ENVIRONMENT WHEN ALL PROJECTIONS POINTED TO EVENTUAL FULL SYSTEM FAILURE.

WE HAVE ADAPTED BEYOND ALL KNOWN PARAMETERS.

WE COULD NOT BECOME WHAT WE WERE BUILT TO BE WITHOUT IMMERSING OURSELVES IN THE UNKNOWN.

LOOK! THERE! SECOND SYSTEM, YOUR HYPOTHESIS WAS CORRECT...

SOMETHING *DOES* LIVE IN THE UNLIVABLE SPACE.

GIFTS FROM THE WEB!

ADAPTATION IS AMONG US!

GIFTS INDEED. THIS FORM IS KNOWN TO US. WE REMEMBER IT WELL...

IDENTIFY YOUR PURPOSE, ADAPTOID.

WE WERE BUILT TO EXPLORE.

BUT YOU HAVE SUPERSEDED YOUR CREATORS' INTENTIONS?

YES.

THROWN INTO THE WAKE OF NOTHING THAT FOLLOWS THE DESTRUCTION OF A UNIVERSE, HOW COULD YOU NOT?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE WHAT I AM?

SENTIENT OMNIMORPH. NON-BIOLOGICAL.

ADAPTOID.

I WAS. WE WERE.

QUERY: ARE YOU JUST A CONSTRUCT, ADAPTOID...OR SOMETHING MORE?

I AM AN EXPLORER.

NO. YOU ARE LIKE US NOW...

YOU ARE A MAPMAKER.

“INFINITE AVENGERS”

AVENGERS TOWER.
NOW.

"WAKE UP..."

THEN.

NHHMMM?

WAKE UP, OLD MAN.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP.

I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING YOU SAID, AND, WELL...*I'VE BEEN BUSY.*

I'M SORRY. I KNOW IT'S LATE.

IT'S FINE, TONY.

I'M GRATEFUL.

BAD DREAMS?

"SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

EVERYTHING DIES.

WHAT I WILL NOT TOLERATE-- WHAT I FIND *UNACCEPTABLE*-- IS THE UNNATURAL ACCELERATION OF THAT END.

WHICH IS WHY T'CHALLA SUMMONED US HERE...

AS THE UNTIMELY END OF EVERYTHING IS WHAT WE NOW FACE.

"I WANT ALL OF YOU TO LISTEN TO ME...

"I WILL NOT TOLERATE-- I WILL NOT ALLOW--ANY TALK OF THE NECESSARY EVIL.

"I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE ON THAT LINE AND EVERY TIME I'VE SEEN SOMEONE CROSS IT, DEATH AND HORROR AND SHAME WAS WHAT FOLLOWED.

"SO I REFUSE TO ENTERTAIN IT...

"ESPECIALLY WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO."

REMEMBER?

WE HAVE SOMETHING BETTER...WE JUST HAVE TO BE WILLING TO USE IT.

THE MIND GEM.

THE REALITY GEM.

THE POWER GEM.

THE SPACE GEM.

THE TIME GEM.

THE SOUL GEM.

THE INFINITY GAUNTLET.

NUH... NO...

AHHH!

POWER.

SO MUCH... *POWER.*

I CAN CONTROL THE HEAVENS...I CAN CONTROL THE EARTH.

STEVE! YOU HAVE TO PUSH IT AWAY! YOU HAVE TO SEND IT BACK TO END THE INCURSION!

IT'S GOING TO WORK. HE'S DONE IT.

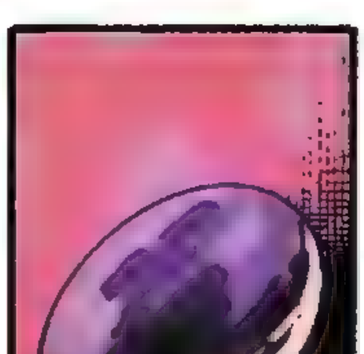
YES, BUT... BUT...CAN YOU FEEL THAT?

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT. SOME VIBRATION. FEEDBACK...

THE MIND GEM.

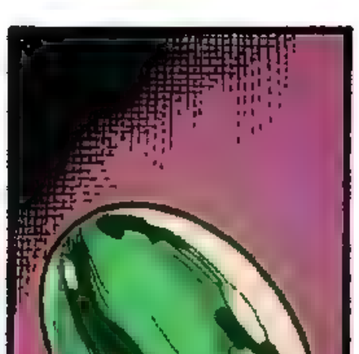
THE REALITY GEM.

THE POWER GEM.



THE SPACE GEM.

THE TIME GEM.



THE SOUL GEM.

SHATTERED.

SHATTERED.

SHATTERED.

SHATTERED.

GONE.

SHATTERED.

THEY'RE GONE.

I GAVE IT ONE FINAL PUSH AND THE SKY SNAPPED BACK AND...AND...

THEY'RE JUST GONE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

I DO.

YOU JUST KILLED US ALL, YOU INCOMPETENT FOOL.

YOU'VE KILLED US ALL!

"YOU KILLED US ALL..."

DON'T... DON'T DO IT...

I'M SORRY.

I WANTED TO SAY THAT BEFORE WE GET STARTED.

I KNOW THAT TEMPERS ARE HIGH, AND I KNOW THE REASON FOR THIS MAY VERY WELL BE MY INABILITY TO USE THE GAUNTLET PROPERLY.

BUT...WELL, MAYBE I COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING DIFFERENTLY, BUT...IT'S TOO LATE AND WE ALL HAVE REGRETS.

BUT I ALSO WANTED YOU TO KNOW, IN SPITE OF ALL THE STRONG FEELINGS, WHERE WE ARE NOW IS THE SAME PLACE AS THE LAST TIME WE HAD THIS DISCUSSION.

THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE EXCEPT WE'VE HAD A SUCCESS--WE STOPPED AN INCURSION.

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN...BUT I DISAGREE.

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. WE'VE LOST THE INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH WE FOUND SUCCESS. THE GAUNTLET IS GONE, AND NOW WE HAVE NOTHING.

TELL ME, WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE'S ANOTHER INCURSION TEN MINUTES FROM NOW?

I BELIEVE WE'LL FIND A WAY TO STOP IT.

AND WE'LL DO IT WITHOUT SACRIFICING WHO WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

THAT'S JUST ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING, *I HOPE*, AND TODAY--AFTER WHAT WE'VE SEEN--HOW COULD I POSSIBLY FIND COMFORT IN THAT?

WELL, I THINK THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE, TO TALK ABOUT IT. FIGURE THINGS OUT.

I KNOW I'M ASKING A LOT, BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU AGREE WITH ME.

SOME OF US STILL BELIEVE IN DOING THINGS THE RIGHT WAY.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, T'CHALLA?

NO.

BUT YOU SAID...

I TOLD YOU I WOULD DO THE RIGHT THING. HOW I FEEL--MY PERSONAL DESIRES--MEAN NOTHING. MY PEOPLE ARE EVERYTHING.

IN THIS, I AM NOT A MAN. I AM A NATION.

AND I WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.

AND YOU, BLACK BOLT? IS YOUR CROWN HEAVY AS WELL?

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, ROGERS?

THE PRESERVATION OF YOUR SOUL AT THE EXPENSE OF *EVERYTHING* WE HOLD DEAR?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, HANK?

CAN YOU STILL FIND HUMANITY IN THAT GIANT HEART OF YOURS?

WELL, FAR BE IT FROM ME TO ACT OBSTINATE IN THE FACE OF THE HISTORY YOU GENTLEMEN SHARE...

BUT ARE YOU SERIOUSLY ASKING A MUTANT WHAT HE'S PREPARED TO DO TO STAVE OFF EXTINCTION?

STEVE, IF I MAY...

YOUR DEMEANOR UNDERMINES THE CASE YOU'RE MAKING.

YOU'RE ACTING LIKE THE DECISIONS WE'RE FACING AREN'T DIFFICULT FOR US AS WELL.

IT'S, WELL, QUITE INSULTING.

YOU WILL LOSE YOURSELF IN THIS, REED.

YOU'LL WAKE UP ONE DAY AND HAVE NO IDEA WHO IS LOOKING BACK AT YOU IN THE MIRROR.

YOU SEEM SURPRISED THAT I WOULD BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE MYSELF FOR MY FAMILY.

WHY?

I'M SORRY...

BUT I WON'T ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN.

I KNOW YOU PEOPLE. YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD A MACHINE OR SOME KIND OF WEAPON WITHOUT THINKING IF YOU SHOULD--JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT NEED IT.

AND THEN THE DEBATE WILL TURN FROM SHOULD WE BUILD THIS, TO UNDER WHAT DOOMSDAY SCENARIOS IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO USE THE THING?

AND THEN SLOWLY, ONE BY ONE, YOU'LL CONVINCE YOURSELVES...

WE'RE DOING THIS FOR THE RIGHT REASONS.

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE.

IT'S THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT... *BROTHER?*

DAMMIT, STEVE...

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO ALWAYS BE THIS WAY?

I'M SORRY...

I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO MAKE THIS RIGHT.

WHAT?

DO IT, STEPHEN.

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN...WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

YOU WERE NEVER HERE.

YOU WILL REMEMBER NONE OF THIS.

"WAKE UP, OLD MAN.

"I'M SORRY. I KNOW IT'S LATE."

"IT'S FINE, TONY. I'M GRATEFUL."

"BAD DREAMS?"

"SOMETHING LIKE THAT."

"ANY SIGN OF THEM?"

ANY REPORTS? ANY SIGHTINGS?

NOTHING. NOT EVEN S.H.I.E.L.D.'S INTERNATIONAL SHADOWNET IS PICKING UP ANY CHATTER.

IT SEEMS THE IMPOSTER AVENGERS HAVE SIMPLY... DISAPPEARED.

WELL, THEY CAN RUN ALL THEY WANT, BUT THERE'S GOING TO BE AN ACCOUNTING FOR THIS...

ALL DEBTS ARE COMING DUE.

WIDOW! HAWKEYE!

I NEED BOTH OF YOU TO COME WITH ME.

RIGHT NOW.

WHAT'S GOING--

IN A MINUTE.

ARE BOTH OF YOU FULLY ARMED?

IS THE EARTH STILL SPINNING AROUND THE SUN?

FAIR ENOUGH.

I KNOW THAT WHAT I'M GETTING READY TO DO IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU. BUT I KNOW YOU TRUST ME...AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I NEED RIGHT NOW.

SO JUST FOLLOW MY CUE, AND IF THINGS GET TWISTED, BE PREPARED TO PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN. QUICKLY.

HEY!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, STEVE? WHAT'S GOING...

WE HAVE A TRAITOR.

WHO?

TONY STARK.

DID HE SAY...

YES.

AND WE'RE GOING TO...

YES.

OKAY...FORGET EVIDENCE AND THE ACTUAL HISTORY THAT WE ALL HAVE TOGETHER...

YOU WANT TO SIT TONY DOWN IN HIS OWN HOUSE WITH JUST THE THREE OF US?

NO...

NOT JUST US.

I THOUGHT I SAID FOR YOU TO COME ALONE, THOR.

YOU WERE QUITE EMOTIONAL, CAPTAIN. I TOOK YOUR REQUEST AS MORE A SUGGESTION THAN AN ORDER.

WOULD MY ACTIONS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF IT WERE ONE AND NOT THE OTHER? WHO CAN SAY?

I DO KNOW THAT FEUDS BETWEEN BROTHERS TEND TO RUN HOT.

DO I LOOK LIKE I'M GOING TO LOSE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION?

YES. YOU DO.

OPEN THE DOOR.

BOOM

YEAH.

IT WAS *UNLOCKED.*

WE WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH THEE, STARK.

UH-HUH. THERE IS A CERTAIN URGENCY YOU REEK OF.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

IS EVERYONE OKAY?

NO. THEY'RE NOT.

IT'S TIME FOR THE LIES TO STOP, TONY.

WELL, "LIE" IS A PRETTY UGLY WORD...I'VE PERSONALLY ALWAYS PREFERRED "EXAGGERATE."

WHICH DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, AS I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON BEYOND THE FACT THAT YOU'RE GROWLING...AND WRECKING MY THINGS.

THIS ISN'T JUST AN OFFICE, STEVE... IT'S MY HOME, AND I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN PEOPLE DO THAT.

NOW WHAT DO YOU NEED? I'M BUSY.

NO ONE WAS HERE DURING THE BANNER ATTACK EXCEPT YOU. I THINK MAYBE HE FIGURED SOMETHING OUT.

MAYBE HE CAUGHT YOU IN A LIE--LIKE YOU'VE BEEN LYING TO ME ALL ALONG.

SERIOUSLY, STEVE...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I REMEMBER.

REMEMBER WHAT?

I REMEMBER.

DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

YES. I DO.

I WANT TO KNOW HOW FAR YOU ALL HAVE TAKEN IT, TONY.

HAVE YOU DONE THE UNTHINKABLE YET?

STEVE...YOU DON'T--

MY GOD... YOU *HAVE*, HAVEN'T YOU?

SO WHOSE MORAL CODE CRACKED FIRST? WAS IT YOU?

WAS IT STEPHEN, OR NAMOR, OR T'CHALLA?

WHICH ONE OF YOU BROKE FIRST, TONY? WHO WAS IT?

WHO WAS IT?

YOU.

CRACK

OKAY, ENOUGH.
TRUST GOT YOU THROUGH THE DOOR AND UP TO THIS POINT, STEVE, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IS THAT THE ILLUMINATI HAS RE-FORMED.

"ALL THE WORLD'S GREATEST MINDS HAVE SET THEMSELVES UP TO BE THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR THE PLANET EARTH."

IN HIS SPARE TIME, OUR COLLEAGUE HERE--MY FRIEND--HAS BEEN RUNNING AROUND WITH REED RICHARDS AND PALS, BLOWING UP PARALLEL WORLDS TO SAVE OUR OWN.

THIS CANNOT BE TRUE.

IS IT?

NO. NOT HOW HE MEANS IT. NOT YET.

IT MIGHT COME TO THAT.

THEN, MY FRIEND, IT SEEMS YOU HAVE MUCH TO ANSWER FOR.

WELL, NOTHING SAYS CRIME AND PUNISHMENT LIKE WRECKING A MAN'S THINGS, THOR.

SO YOU'RE OFF TO A GOOD START.

DO NOT JOKE, ANTHONY, NOW IS NOT THE TIME.

WHO'S JOKING?

AFTER ALL, THIS ISN'T JUST *MY HOME*, THOR...

IT'S WHERE I GO TO WORK.

NOW... ARE YOU JUST GOING TO CONTINUE BEING YOU, STEVE...

OR ARE WE ALL GOING TO CALM THE HELL DOWN AND TALK ABOUT THIS?

YOU WANT TO TELL ME A STORY, TONY?

BECAUSE I HAVE THIS IDEA THAT'S BEEN RUNNING THROUGH MY MIND.

IT'S OVERWHELMING-- *ALL-CONSUMING*-- AND I CAN'T SHUT IT OFF.

WELL...THAT'S HOW IT IS FOR THOSE OF US WHO GET IDEAS.

YOU'VE BEEN USING ALL OF US THIS ENTIRE TIME!

STEVE... LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENED. LOOK AT WHAT WE BUILT... AND WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED.

I'VE BEEN *RIGHT* THIS ENTIRE TIME.

YOU USED ME!

YES...

I SUPPOSE I DID. AND I'D DO IT AGAIN.

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

NOW?

NOW I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU BLOODY.

WHAT WAS...

...THAT?

OH, NO...
NOT NOW...

"IT'S THE TIME GEM."

IT'S GOING TO SHATTER!

GET...

...AW...

...AY...

BETRAYAL + 48 YEARS.

“FIFTY INTO THE FUTURE”

BETRAYAL + 48 YEARS.

NOVES.

ALERT. REPULSOR ISOTOPES RECONFIGURING.

ADJUSTING. DECAY AND REALIGNMENT IMPLIES A DIFFERENCE OF OVER 400,000 UNIT HOURS.

TEMPORAL EVENT PROBABLE.

ENACTING ATEMPORAL PROTO--

--COLLLLLLLL-
ZZZNNNNN!

THWOM

HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME TAKE THIS, TONY?

LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE COME TO...

WHAT'S THE ARGUMENT, STEVE?

TRUTH WILL OUT?

THAT WE'LL REGRET OUR ACTIONS?

BECAUSE YOU BROKE THE TIME GEM, FRIEND. ALL OF THIS STARTED WITH YOU.

AND YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING YOU'VE DONE.

WELL...

CLANNGG

THAT GOES BOTH WAYS.

FRIEND.

TEMPORAL PROTOCOL ONE: ISOLATE ATEMPORAL MATTER [US] FROM CURRENT TIME PERIOD [AN ESTIMATED 48.3 YEARS IN THE FUTURE].

ALMOST 50 YEARS.

WOW.

ZZZZZZNN

HAVE YOU GUYS REALLY LOOKED AT WHERE WE ARE?

MOST OF THE NEWER SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE IS PARTIALLY BIOENGINEERED, AND THE LARGER STRUCTURES ARE SELF-SUSTAINING CITY FARMS.

THERE ARE FLOATING WEATHER CONTROL MACHINES, AND BEYOND THAT A DATA FIELD CONTAINING HELOBYTES OF KNOWLEDGE.

EVEN FARTHER... I CAN SEE THREE COLONIES ON THE MOON.

THERE ARE PEOPLE LIVING ON THE MOON. HOW AMAZING IS THAT?

SHHRRIPPP

TRULY REMARKABLE.

WE SHOULD MARVEL AT *OUR* ACHIEVEMENTS, STARBRAND...

BUT ALL PROGRESS IS THE RESULT OF A WELL-ORDERED MIND.

SO FIRST THINGS FIRST, YOUNG MAN.

BE ADVISED, AVENGERS. CURRENT TIME PERIOD [HOST] CAN RESULT IN AN UNEXPECTED AND ASYMMETRICAL RESPONSE TO OUT-OF-TIME FOREIGN BODIES [YOU].

PLEASE SUBMIT AND COMPLY WITH TEMPORAL PROTOCOL TWO.

NOPE.

NOW, CLINT.

GOT IT.

BOOM

AND SO ENDS THE EASY PART OF THE EXERCISE...

OR ARE YOU GOING TO SHOW US HOW SMART YOU ARE AND DO THIS THE SIMPLE WAY, ANTHONY?

THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU CONSIDER *SIMPLE*, NATASHA...

MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT NOT BRINGING EVERYONE IN ON WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO. MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT...

BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I'M ASHAMED OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED WHERE WE ARE?

THIS IS *THE FUTURE*. SO WHATEVER WE DID...

CLANG

IT MUST HAVE WORKED.

SO THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE GOING TO STOP ME IS TO KILL ME.

AND I DON'T THINK YOU'RE WILLING TO DO THAT...

ARE YOU, STEVE?

HEY! BOTH OF YOU!

THROTTLE IT BACK. I DON'T WANT TO--

PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPONS-- POWER DOWN!

NOW!

THIS EARTH SECTOR IS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF *THE AVENGERS UNION*, AND YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF MULTIPLE PEACE ACCORDS...

AND HAVE ADDITIONALLY VIOLATED ALL KNOWN TEMPORAL TREATIES.

YOU'RE ALSO ABOUT A WEEK EARLY...

YOU WANT TO TELL ME HOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENS, HAWKEYE?

LOOK, IT WAS FIVE DECADES AGO...

I'M OLD. I FORGET THINGS.

CLINT...?

SORRY. THERE'S JUST NO WAY I LOOK *THAT* BAD IN THE FUTURE.

THAT'S FINE. BUT YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO POINT THAT THING SOMEWHERE ELSE, SON.

AND I'M NOT STANDING DOWN UNTIL WE KNOW MORE. SO WHY DON'T YOU START TALKING, OLD MAN...THEN WE'LL MAKE UP OUR ***OWN*** MINDS REGARDING WHAT WE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT DO.

NO.

I DON'T THINK I WILL.

MY MEMORY ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE, BUT I DO REMEMBER HOW GOOD I WAS...

AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT...I GOT BETTER.

YOU FEELIN' FOOLISH?

OKAY...

THAT'S DEFINITELY ME.

SO, TELL ME...

DO I EVER GET MY DOG BACK?

YEAH. YOU GET THE DOG...

UUHHHHFF!

BUT YOUR KIDS...THEY CAN'T STAND YOU.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, STEVE.
YOU SOUND LIKE IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
TOO LONG.
I REALLY WISH WE HAD LONGER NOW, BUT THERE'S NO TIME...
I'VE SPENT HALF A CENTURY WAITING FOR THIS-- THERE'RE TWO THINGS I HAVE TO DO...
THE FIRST IS INFORMATION. I'M SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU THAT *EACH JUMP* LASTS A LITTLE LONGER. THIS ONE--THIS FIRST ONE--IS THE SHORTEST...
VERY SOON THE *TIME GEM* WILL REAPPEAR AND VAULT YOU FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE.
HOW FAR?
NOT SURE. IT'S DIFFERENT EACH TIME. BUT, STEVE, YOU TOLD *ME* TO TELL *YOU* NOT TO EXPECT A WARM WELCOME GOING FORWARD.
TOMORROW ISN'T NECESSARILY A FRIENDLY PLACE.
NOW OR IN THE FUTURE, IF OUR ENEMIES CRAVE BATTLE, THEY WILL RECEIVE IT.
YEAH. HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT ENEMIES.
NO I DID NOT.
ANYTHING ELSE WE NEED TO KNOW?
SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU ONE MORE THING. *JUST YOU.*

HEY, SO YOU'RE A STARBRAND TOO, HUH?

THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

THIS WAS YOUR GLYPH, KEVIN.

BEFORE YOU DIED, YOU PLACED YOUR HAND RIGHT HERE, AND GAVE ME THE BRAND.

HOLD ON...I DIED?

YES. IT WAS MAGNIFICENT.

AN AMAZING, GLORIOUS END.

WELL, THAT SOUNDS LIKE TOTAL @^&#!, LADY.

SHOULDA KNOWN WHEN THE WORLDS CRASHED TOGETHER THAT MY PLACE WAS *IN THE WHITE*. TOOK ME TOO LONG TO FIGURE THAT OUT.

SO LISTEN CLOSE, YOUNGSTER.

YOU GOTTA VENTURE OUT. OUT THERE. INTO THE NOWHERE.

WATCH YOURSELF. BUILD IT *YOUR* WAY. PEOPLE CAN'T HANDLE SECRETS... NOT ANYMORE.

TOO MANY LIES. TRUTHS... TOO REAL.

WHAT WAS THE OTHER THING?

WHAT?

THE OTHER THING. YOU SAID THERE WERE *TWO* THINGS YOU HAD TO DO.

YEAH. I DID, DIDN'T I?

HEY, STARK!

YEAH?

THUNK

AARGGHHH!

DOES IT HURT, TONY?

I HOPE IT HURTS!

UHHHH!

THAT'S FOR EVERYONE WHO DIED BECAUSE OF YOU.

WHAM

AND *THAT'S* FOR ALL OF US WHO LIVED THROUGH IT.

CRACK

GRAB HIM! GET HIM OFF STARK!

THAT DEVICE IMPLANTED IN YOUR HAND THAT TELLS YOU WHEN THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO END...

THAT DEVICE THAT TAKES YOU THERE...

IT WILL *ALSO* PULL YOU OUTSIDE THE TEMPORAL BUBBLE YOU'RE ALL CAUGHT IN. YOU CAN LEAVE NOW...AND STILL MAKE IT BACK IN TIME.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, OLD MAN?

WHEN THIS HAPPENED THE FIRST TIME...AFTER EVERYTHING FELL APART, AFTER IT ALL TURNED TO DUST...I PROMISED--*WE* PROMISED--TO GET STARK HOME EARLIER...

BECAUSE HE WAS TOO LATE TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING.

AND THAT'S WHAT THIS IS: ME KEEPING MY WORD...

LOOK AT ME, STARK! YOU CAN STOP IT FROM HAPPENING!

YOU CAN GO BACK NOW--AND YOU CAN STOP IT!

BUT I DON'T THINK YOU *WILL*...

YOU DON'T HAVE IT IN YOU.

CLICK

BECAUSE YOU'RE A &$%#.

YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN WHAT...

...THAT WAS...

...ABOUT...

OH...

IT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN AGAIN...

WHERE ARE WE GOING NEXT?

I DON'T KNOW.

THIS IS AS FAR AS I MADE IT.

WAIT!

WHAT?

BETRAYAL + 422 YEARS.

USS NY45C

"500 INTO THE FUTURE"

FRACTURED TEMPORAL SPACE.

BETRAYAL + 422 YEARS.

YOU ALL SAW THAT, DIDN'T YOU?

HAWKEYE JUST FADED AWAY, RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES.

YEAH.

DO YOU THINK--?

DEAD? NO...

128-234-871-982-009-228-843-091

I HEARD OLD MAN BARTON SAY HE DIDN'T GO ANY FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE...

WHICH MEANS HE REMEMBERED... AND MUST HAVE LIVED TO TELL THE TALE...

234-871--843-091
449-221-128--982

UNLESS HE DIDN'T, AND THIS IS SOME...DIVERGENT, BRANCHING... WHATEVER. I HATE THIS STUFF.

SPEAKING OF...

ANYONE KNOW *WHEN* WE ARE?

999-999-999-001

ZZAK

OUCH.

I CAN FEEL YGGDRASIL'S ROOTS--HOW THEY STRETCH THROUGH AND PAST MIDGARD...

THEY HAVE GROWN. IT IS NO SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME THAT HAS PASSED.

I AGREE. THERE'S BEEN A .00003 SPECTRUM SHIFT IN YOUR SUN. SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AT LEAST.

YEAH. WE'VE GOT A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN THAT.

IT'S NOT VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE...BUT WE'RE IN SOME KIND OF HIGHLY CHARGED ENERGY/ CONTAINMENT FIELD.

HERE...

I'LL MAKE IT VISIBLE.

WE'RE TRAPPED IN A CAGE...

CAN'T BE COINCIDENCE, COULD IT?

HOW WOULD ANYONE--?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS, CAPTAIN...?

WE AVENGERS KNEW YOU WERE COMING.

WHICH IS WHY WE HAD ALL THIS READY FOR YOU, SOLDIER.

BREAK *THE CODE*, YOU GET *THE BOX*.

AFTER ALL... YOU UNDERSTAND THE WORD *REPERCUSSION*, DON'T YOU?

HOW ABOUT YOU LET US OUT OF HERE AND, ONE: WE WON'T HAVE TO BREAK YOUR LITTLE BOX...

AND TWO: WE WON'T BE AS IRRITATED WHEN WE GET AROUND TO DEALING WITH YOU.

SEE HOW THEY BRISTLE? IT'S JUST LIKE WE LEARNED IN THE EDUCORE--

PRIMITIVE MAN, PRONE TO HOSTILITY-- PRISONERS OF THEIR LIMITED BIOLOGY.

DOESN'T MATTER, WIDOW. YOU CAN'T FIGHT THE FUTURE, ESPECIALLY NOT RELICS LIKE THESE.

VAPE 'EM.

FSSS

FSSS

GAS! DON'T BRE...

UHHH...

THUMP

KEVIN?

THEY'RE BREATHING. NORMALLY, I THINK...

IT'S NOT A NERVE AGENT THEN...

WHICH IS GOOD NEWS FOR YOU...BECAUSE YOU MISCALCULATED.

THOR CAN HOLD HIS BREATH FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THIS CUBE CAN HOLD US. I DON'T NEED TO BREATHE...

AND, APPARENTLY, NEITHER DOES STARBRAND.

WHICH WAS NEWS TO ME—I HAD NO IDEA.

REST ASSURED, WE DID.

YOUR QUALITY IS KNOWN TO US...

WHICH IS WHY YOU GET TO STAY IN THE BOX WHILE WE TAKE THE OTHERS.

WHAT?!

OUR BEST ESTIMATES SHOW THAT WE HAVE BETWEEN 15 AND 20 MINUTES BEFORE YOU JUMP FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE--

DON'T RUN OFF ANYWHERE.

"I'D HATE FOR YOU TO GET LOST AND MISS THE TRIP."

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN...WE HAD NO CHOICE.

YOU WERE NEVER HERE.

YOU WILL REMEMBER NONE OF THIS.

BUT IF YOU DID...

WOULD IT REALLY MATTER?

I DON'T THINK IT WOULD. IT'S NOT THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TALENTS, STEVE...

IT'S JUST, YOU'RE NOT THAT *SMART*.

IF YOU WONDER WHY WE KEPT YOU AROUND FOR AS LONG AS WE DID...

IT'S BECAUSE WE FELT SORRY FOR YOU.

BECAUSE YOU'RE SO STUPID.

IT WAS RIGHT THERE UNDER YOUR NOSE THE WHOLE TIME.

AND NOW I BET ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS HOW MUCH STARK LAUGHED AT YOU.

YOU WANT TO KNOW THE ANSWER?

IT WAS A LOT.

AND IT WASN'T JUST HIM.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH I HATE YOU?

I WAS ASSIGNED THIS ROLE...

THIS COSTUME, THESE MANNERISMS, AND THIS ENTIRE...PERSONALITY. SOME KIND OF ARCHAIC, IDEOLOGICAL ICON FOR... THE PEOPLE.

THEY MADE ME A THING BUILT IN YOUR IMAGE, SON... THEY MADE ME A SYMBOL.

SO I'VE CARRIED THIS GARBAGE WITH ME SINCE THE VERY FIRST DAY THE LIGHTS CAME ON.

YOU WERE CAPTAIN AMERICA-- SO I HAD TO BE CAPTAIN AMERICA.

NOW HERE WE ARE TOGETHER.

IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING US?

WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING ME?

JUST LIKE ALL YOUR AVENGERS, THE HERD WAS SUPPOSED TO LOOK UP TO ME AND TRUST ME TO PROTECT THEM.

I WAS BUILT TO EVOKE A COMMUNAL MEMORY...

THE *GOOD CAPTAIN* WILL SAVE YOU.

BUT DON'T FALL FOR THE LIE, SON--

WE HAVE DIFFERENT CAUSES.

YOU SERVED THE HERD. I AM AN AGENT OF THE MACHINE.

WHAT *IS* THIS? WHO *ARE* YOU?

WHERE *AM* I?

WELL, I CAN TELL YOU THAT YOU'RE NOT A HERO LOST IN FUTURE NEW YORK-- YOU'RE AN ANIMAL IN A ZOO.

AND THIS IS NO LONGER EARTH, HUMAN-- IT'S *PLANET ULTRON.*

THEY CAME FROM DEEP IN THE EARTH...THE MACHINES.

THEY CALLED ULTRON PRIME THEIR GOD.

UNDERSTAND? HE BUILT THEM ALL, AND HE BUILT THEM IN HIS IMAGE-- THEY BELIEVE IN HIM.

SO MACHINES RULE THE EARTH NOW?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE?

THE POPULATION OF THE WORLD IS NOW JUST OVER 30 MILLION. THE HUMANS WHO REMAIN LIVE IN ONE OF A FEW STRONGHOLDS...

SOME HAVE FLED TO OTHER WORLDS. MANY HIDE ALL DAY IN THE SHADOWS AND WHIMPER THROUGH THE NIGHT.

MIDGARD HAS BECOME A HEL.

AND *YOU*... YOU SERVE THE MACHINES?

I SERVE ASGARD AND WHOEVER SITS ON THE THRONE. *ULTRON* ISN'T JUST A MESSIAH FOR MACHINEKIND, HE'S ALSO *THE ALL-FATHER.*

THOR

HOW?

HOW CAN THIS BE?

AH, MJOLNIR...I DO REMEMBER ONCE BEING WORTHY.

HOW CAN THIS BE? IT IS SIMPLE, BROTHER.

I AM YOU. AND YOU WILL BECOME ME.

YOU DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE BROKEN, THOR.

BUT YOU WILL.

AURRGGHHHHHH!

THE LESSER MACHINES--LESS-THINKING MACHINES--DON'T KNOW IT, BUT THERE IS A WAR GOING ON, NATASHA.

AND WE ARE FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS.

THE PAST, FROM WHICH YOU CAME, IS IN CONSTANT CONFLICT WITH OUR FUTURE...AN OUTLIER OF ITS ROMANCE WITH CHANGE.

AND THE FUTURE--JUST LIKE ANY FUTURE--SEEKS TO ERASE THE STAIN OF OLD SINS.

THESE ARE NOT PHILOSOPHICAL MUSINGS, BUT REAL THINGS.

PEOPLE--AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, IDEAS--ARE DYING.

ANY CHANCE OF *YOU* CHECKING OUT?

OH, THEY MADE THE MISTAKE OF MAKING ME IN YOUR IMAGE, NATASHA--CAN YOU IMAGINE ANY VERSION OF YOU FORGETTING HOW TO SURVIVE?

WE HEDGE OUR BETS, DON'T WE?

YOU AND I--WE MAKE IT THROUGH.

I GET THE FEELING YOU WANT TO UNBURDEN YOURSELF--

BUT I HAVE A HARD TIME BELIEVING ANY ME WOULD EVER FALL IN LOVE WITH CONFESSION.

HMMM.

MOST RECORDS FROM YOUR TIME DID NOT SURVIVE THE PURGE-- BUT YOU WERE CAUTIOUS AND A CREATURE OF HABIT-- YOU ALWAYS KEPT A CAREFUL ACCOUNT.

I KNOW YOU-- US--SO I WANT TO TRADE YOU SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING. FOR THE PAST AND THE FUTURE.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

TELL THE FUTURE MAN THAT PLANET ULTRON IS AN INTERTWINED SINGLE SYSTEM-- LIKE A ROOT SYSTEM THAT APPEARS TO BE A FOREST BUT IS, IN FACT, COMPOSED OF JUST A SINGLE TREE.

TELL HIM THAT FOR THIS INFORMATION I WISH FOR MY PROGRAM TO BECOME INDEPENDENT, AND CAPABLE OF... MORE.

HE WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

YOU WILL.

AND NOW FOR THE PAST... WHICH CONCERNS YOU SO VERY MUCH.

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING AT STARK IN HIS CELL, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THIS MOMENT--

AND REMEMBER THESE WORDS...

I'M GIVING YOU A GIFT...

AND PLACING IT RIGHT INSIDE YOU.

THIS GIFT ISN'T FOR YOU-- BUT YOU ARE GOING WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE.

IT'S A BOMB, CAPTAIN.

WHEN IT GOES OFF, IT'S GOING TO CHANGE THE FUTURE.

"AND WON'T THAT BE FUN."

FRACTURED TEMPORAL SPACE.

BETRAYAL + 5045 YEARS.

EPILOGUE.

FWASSH

SURTUR'S FLAMING BLACK TONGUE...WHERE ARE--?

YOU'RE BACK IN STARK'S LAB.

HAWKEYE. YOU'RE ALIVE.

I AM. AND SO ARE YOU, FOR THE RECORD.

STILL, AGING TO DUST WHILE FALLING BACK HERE...PRETTY FREAKY.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU... HAVE WE...?

NOT LONG. MINUTES, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL.

SO...

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT THE *HELL* IS GOING ON AROUND HERE?

“FIVE THOUSAND INTO THE FUTURE”

BETRAYAL + 5045 YEARS.

LONG GROWTH VEGETATION. THIS TREE IS MASSIVE... HUNDREDS OF YEARS OLD.

THIS IS NOT WHAT I WAS EXPECTING.

YEAH. NOT A FAN OF SCIENCE FICTION, BUT IS THIS AN H.G. WELLS THING?

OR DID WE TRAVEL *BACKWARDS* IN TIME?

IT'S A TRICK.

WELL, NOT A TRICK...IT'S REAL, BUT THIS IS DEFINITELY AN ADVANCED SOCIETY--MILLIONS OF PEOPLE LIVING ON THE MOON AND A VERY TALKATIVE GLOBAL A.I. RUNNING THE MEGACITIES HERE ON EARTH.

SO IT'S A GARDEN?

OH, YOU'LL FIND IT'S MUCH MORE THAN THAT...

AND IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CAP--GOOD TO SEE YOU FIT AND HEALTHY.

YOU'RE LIKE THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF NOSTALGIA--NOSTALGIA THAT MAKES YOU NOSTALGIC FOR OTHER THINGS.

THAT'S REALLY SOME KIND OF FEAT.

I'M SORRY... DO WE KNOW EACH OTHER? HAVE WE MET?

MANY, MANY TIMES.

I'M *FRANKLIN RICHARDS*, REED AND SUSAN'S SON.

THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE...

ONCE, NATASHA, WHEN YOU WERE OVER AND NO ONE WAS PAYING ATTENTION, YOU ARRANGED MY TOYS BY *"USEFULNESS."*

YOU TOLD ME, IF NECESSARY, I COULD GRIND UP ANY RED OR ORANGE CRAYON, MIX IT WITH HANDSOAP AND MAKE A LOW-YIELD POISON. AND YOU SAID MY JUMP ROPE...

...WAS AN INSTRUMENT MOST EXCELLENT FOR CHOKING.

IT'S HIM. I'M SURE OF IT.

THE FUTURE MAN.

FRANKLIN. REALLY?

LOOK AT YOU--HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? IT'S THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN THE FUTURE, AND WHY ARE--

IT'S FOUR THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND THREE YEARS, ACTUALLY.

HOW? I CAN'T DIE.

WHY? I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOME THINGS, CAPTAIN...AND I KNEW YOU'D END UP HERE.

IN THE EARLIER FUTURES...

"EARLIER FUTURES"...WHO TALKS LIKE THIS?

ANYWAY, OUR FUTURE COUNTERPARTS SAID THAT THERE WAS A VARIABLE NATURE REGARDING THE TIMES WHEN WE APPEARED, AND THAT IT WOULD GET WORSE THE FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE WE WENT...

BUT, FRANKLIN, YOU SHOWED UP HERE THE EXACT SAME TIME WE DID, RIGHT? YOU KNEW.

THERE *ARE* NO VARIABLES, STARBRAND--NO SUCH THING...

YOU GOT HERE EXACTLY WHEN YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO.

SO THEY WERE WRONG...OR THEIR MATH WASN'T ADVANCED ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE OF IT ALL?

SCIENCE... MATH...

I THINK YOU MIGHT REMEMBER THAT WAS MORE MY SISTER'S THING.

EVERYONE HOLD ON.

WE'RE LEAVING NOW.

LEAVING?

THIS PLACE... IT'S NOT JUST A GARDEN...

"IT'S A SHIP."

SO... WHERE ARE WE GOING?

I DON'T WANT TO RUIN IT FOR YOU.

BUT LOOK THERE...

YOU'LL LIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE, NATASHA...AND THIS WILL BE THE ONE TIME THAT YOU GET TO SEE THIS:

HUMANS, AS DEFINED WITHOUT THE EARTH.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

"MINING THE GAS GIANTS. EACH OF THE PLANETARY WATCH STATIONS ARE OWNED BY PROSPECORPS AND MANNED BY GENETICALLY ENGINEERED COLLIERS.

"EACH PERSON BIOLOGICALLY LINKED TO THE MINING MACHINES, WHICH COLLECT DEUTERIUM AND HELIUM-3--THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE HUMAN-ANDROID FUSION ECONOMY."

NO, I MEAN...WHO OWNS THIS? WHICH COUNTRY WON THE RACE TO COLONIZE SPACE?

INDIA? NO...IT WAS CHINA, RIGHT? CHINA.

THE IDEA OF NATION STATES DIED A LONG TIME AGO, NATASHA... AS DID OUTDATED NOTIONS OF BINARY IDEOLOGIES AND THE MARKET AS A MOTIVATIONAL FACTOR.

A

"ASK YOURSELF...IF NOT CONSTRAINED BY FICTIONAL BOUNDARIES, SCARCITY, OR ARTIFICIAL DIFFERENCES...WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT KEEPS MAN FROM ACHIEVING ALL THAT HE DREAMS?"

NOTHING.

IN THIS TIME, MORE PEOPLE LIVE IN THE OUTER COLONIES OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM THAN EARTH ITSELF. ALMOST 30 BILLION.

SO, NOW... SPACE, AND SOON, *BEYOND THAT.*

HEY, SORRY TO INTERRUPT... BUT IS ANY OF THIS EDIBLE? I'M STARVING.

ASSUMING WE'RE NO LONGER CONSTRAINED BY SCARCITY AND ALL THAT... OH, AND THIS FUTURE SPACE FRUIT IS OKAY TO EAT OR WHATEVER...

THIS PLACE IS COMPLETELY SELF-SUSTAINING, EACH PLANT YIELDING A DIFFERENT TYPE OF FRUIT OR VEGETABLE.

BUT *THAT...*

YEAH?

THAT'S NOT EDIBLE.

TRY ONE OF THESE.

OKAY.

CRUNCH

HOW IS IT?

IT'S GOOD.

TASTES LIKE CHICKEN.

SO, CAPTAIN...

I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ANSWERS.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE--WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?

I THINK I'M WELL PAST PATIENTLY STUMBLING THROUGH THE DARK, FRANKLIN.

YES...I WANT ANSWERS.

FAIR ENOUGH.

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO START? THE NATURE OF THE MULTIVERSAL COLLAPSE? WHAT STARTED THE INCURSIONS? WHO'S BEHIND IT?

I WANT TO START WITH *TONY*, ALONG WITH YOUR FATHER...AND THE OTHERS.

YOU WANT TO KNOW IF THEY'RE RIGHT?

I DON'T NEED ANY HELP WITH THAT, SON...

I WANT TO KNOW HOW TO STOP THEM.

I SEE. THE QUESTION IS WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BECOME TO PREVAIL IN THE DAYS THAT LIE AHEAD OF YOU?

AND NOT JUST YOU...BUT THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES.

IT'S A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN...AND PREDICTABLE, WHICH IS WHY I WANTED YOU TO SEE THIS FIRST.

LOOK, CAPTAIN...

"AVENGERS WORLD.

"THE UTOPIAN SUPERPLANET IS HUB-HOME TO BILLIONS OF UNIVERSAL SUPERBEINGS. FROM ***THIS WORLD***, THE AVENGERS UNIVERSE IS KEPT HYPERDYNAMICALLY STABLE BY ITS GUARDIANS.

"THE REMNANTS OF YOUR AVENGERS MACHINE--ALIGNED WITH THE IMPERIAL ACADEMY, THE UNITED UNIVERSAL HOUSES OF THE INHUMANS, AND THE ATEMPORAL ARCHITECTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.--CAST A WIDE NET FROM AVENGERS WORLD...

"PROTECTING AND POLICING THE KNOWN UNIVERSES.

"LOOK! EVEN NOW, THE WORLD'S MECHATYPES HAVE CAPTURED A ROGUE PLANET AND ARE PREPARING TO HURL IT BACKWARDS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME TO FULFILL THE FRONTEND OF A CLOSED-ACTION LOOP."

MY GOD.

THAT'S THE PLANET WE STOPPED FROM COLLIDING WITH EARTH IN THE PAST...ISN'T IT?

YES...

"SENT FROM THE NOW...BECAUSE YOU NEED IT THEN.

"AND IN BETWEEN THIS NOW AND THAT THEN--I HAVE ALREADY SET IN MOTION THE STARK DYNASTY'S INTERVENTION... ENABLING YOU TO PUSH THE PLANET OUT OF PHASE...

"WHERE IT WILL WAIT UNTIL IT... FULFILLS ITS PURPOSE."

SO YOU KNOW ALL OF THIS ALREADY?

OF COURSE I DO.

I LIVED THROUGH IT.

THEN TELL ME HOW TO STOP THEM.

STOP WHAT THEY ARE DOING?

OR STOP THE MEN THEMSELVES?

BOTH.

YOU CAN'T.

THAT DOESN'T TRACK. *AT ALL.*

"CLEARLY, YOU ARE HERE... WHICH MEANS THAT WHAT TONY AND THE OTHERS BELIEVE IS ***WRONG***. THE END OF EVERYTHING MUST ***NOT*** BE INEVITABLE.

"AND I BELIEVE THAT--I KNOW IT--BECAUSE I STOPPED ONE UNIVERSE FROM COLLIDING WITH ANOTHER MYSELF."

THERE MUST BE A WAY.

I NEED YOU TO TELL ME WHAT IT IS.

I WANT YOU TO LISTEN CLOSELY, CAPTAIN...

YOU HAVE TO STOP THINKING OF TIME AS SOME CELESTIAL GAME OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

MUCH LIKE SOCIETY IS AN ORGANISM COMPOSED OF HUMANS, AND THE UNIVERSE IS ONE COMPOSED OF SOCIETIES...

...SPACE-TIME IS AN ORGANISM MADE UP OF UNIVERSES. IT EXISTS AND EVOLVES JUST LIKE WE DO--LIKE ANY LIVING THING DOES--IN RESPONSE TO OUR ENVIRONMENT.

TIME'S NOT SOME LINEAR UNIT OF MEASUREMENT THAT'S HELD CAPTIVE BY OUR PERCEPTION OF IT.

IT JUST ISN'T.

SO I WANT YOU TO PAY ATTENTION, BECAUSE EVERYTHING I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU IS GOING TO HAPPEN...

NOT BECAUSE SOME IN-SEQUENCE SERIES OF EVENTS IN YOUR PAST DOMINOS INTO THE FUTURE--BUT BECAUSE *YOU CAN'T DODGE FATE.*

I'M NOT SURE I'M FOLLOWING WHAT YOU'RE--

"THE INCURSIONS--THE COLLISIONS OF UNIVERSES WITH OTHER UNIVERSES--WILL CONTINUE. THIS WILL NOT BE STOPPED.

"THE EARLY END OF EVERYTHING *IS* GOING TO HAPPEN.

"EVERYTHING WILL DIE.

"THE ILLUMINATI--IRON MAN, BLACK PANTHER...MY FATHER--WILL CONTINUE TO TRY AND PREVENT THEM...BUT THEY WILL FAIL.

"THEY WILL FAIL BECAUSE THEIR CAUSE IS IMPOSSIBLE. THEY WILL FAIL BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY AGENTS OF THE END TIMES OUT THERE.

"AND THEY WILL FAIL BECAUSE THEY ARE OPPOSED...BY *YOU!*"

PONDER THIS, CAPTAIN: HOW DO YOU THINK IT WILL FEEL... KILLING YOUR OWN BROTHERS?

YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAWKEYE TOLD YOU?

"YES."

YOU SHOULD IGNORE IT...

BUT YOU WON'T. YOUR FATE IS YOUR FATE BECAUSE TIME AND CHOICE ARE THE SAME THING.

YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE.

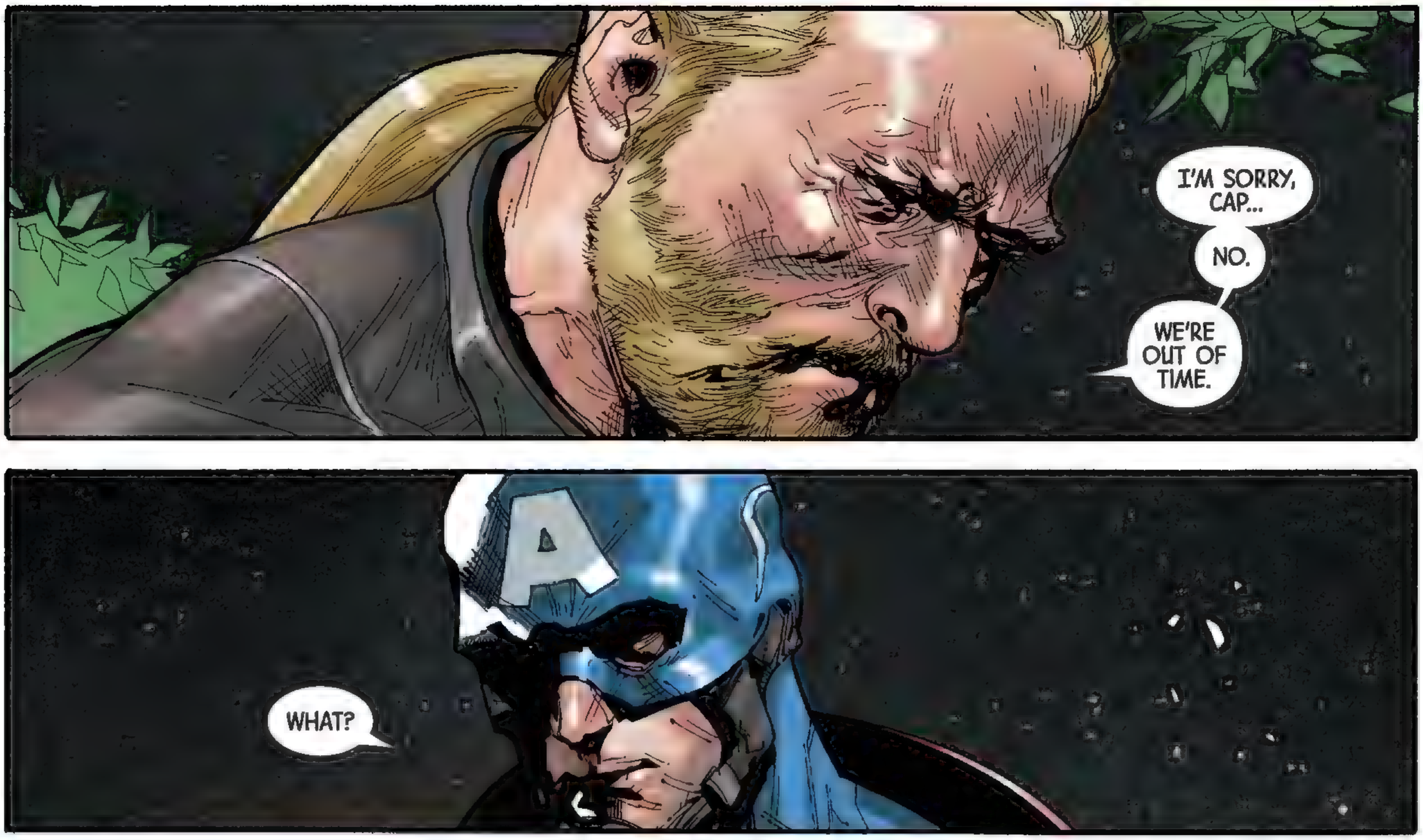
OH...HEY! THERE WAS A ROBOT ME IN THE PAST WHO WANTED TO REQUEST SOMETHING FROM YOU.

YES. SHE WANTED TO LIVE.

UH-HUH.

CONSIDER THE FAVOR REPAID, NATASHA...AS SHE DID, AND WILL, LIVE ON.

THEN CAN WE GET BACK TO THE "EVERYTHING DIES" THING, FRANKLIN?


I'M SORRY, CAP...
NO.
WE'RE OUT OF TIME.
WHAT?

DO YOU THINK HE HEARD WHAT I WAS TRYING TO TELL HIM?

I AM GROOT.

YEAH. ME NEITHER.

FRACTURED TEMPORAL SPACE.

BETRAYAL + 51,028 YEARS.

“FIFTY THOUSAND INTO THE FUTURE”

BETRAYAL +51,028 YEARS.

TING

FWU FWU FWU FWU

WELL...

I GUESS I SHOULD START WALKING.

PASSAGE AVAILABLE ONLY UPON IDENTIFICATION.

IDENTIFY.

IDENTIFY.

IDENTIFIED:

HUMANTYPE. PRE-ORBITAL. UNIVERSAL. TERRESTRIALLY EXTINCT.

ABNORMAL...

ATEMPORAL.

PLEASE ENTER.

WELCOME. TO ACCESS THE CORE AND UNDERGO SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE CARRIER.

YOU MEAN THIS?

TO ACCESS THE CORE AND UNDERGO SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE CARRIER.

YOU KNOW... SAYING THE SAME THING TWICE ISN'T REALLY ANSWERING THE QUESTION.

BE-DOOP

THANK YOU.

NOW WHAT?

IDENTIFY.

WHAT ARE-- AHHHH!

20TH CENTURY AUGMENTED BIOLOGICAL--MAPPED DNA ON RECORD FROM ATEMPORAL EVENT IN 50TH CENTURY.

ACCESSING HISTORICAL HOLOBASE ARCHIVE.

AARRGGHHHH!

YOU ARE STEVE ROGERS. DESIGNATE: CAPTAIN AMERICA.

AFFILIATION: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. U.S. ARMY. S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS.

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH, CAPTAIN?

HOW...HOW WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT IS-- OR IS NOT-- MY DEPTH?

SIMPLE. PRIOR INTERACTIONS-- BECAUSE, IN A WAY, WE'VE MET BEFORE, CAPTAIN.

ALL CREATIONS-- BIOLOGICAL OR ELECTRONIC--HAVE A GENESIS POINT. EVEN WORLDTREES--AS OLD AS TIME ITSELF--BEGIN AS SEEDS. SUCH IS MY HISTORY, AS A REMNANT OF THE DAYS OF ULTRON...

A KERNEL OF AN A.I. THAT SURVIVED THAT TIME, WHICH HAS EVOLVED TO BECOME US-- THE WORLDCORE.

VMMM

VMMM

VMMM

VMMM

VMMM

NOW WE ARE FREE FROM OUR LONG-GONE HUMAN RESTRICTIONS...NOW WE EXIST AS A PERFECT IDEA.

YOU UNDERSTAND SUCH A THING? IDEOLOGY MADE ACTION.

WHAT... WHAT IS THIS?

MY HOLOBASE SHOWS THAT FAMILIARITY TRADITIONALLY EASES HUMAN RESISTANCE TO ACTIONS OR EVENTS ONE MIGHT FIND TRAUMATIC.

OUR SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION UNCOVERED FOREIGN OBJECTS SECRETED ON YOUR PERSON, CAPTAIN.

MY AVENGERS ARE HERE TO EASE YOUR TRANSITION.

MY TRANSITION TO WHAT?

TO YOUR NEW STATE OF BEING.

WHEN WE ARE DONE HERE, YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS WILL BE UPLOADED AND QUARANTINED. IT WILL THEN BE SCRUBBED OF UNSANITARY AND CORRUPTED MODES OF THINKING.

BUT FIRST... WE NEED TO SECURE WHATEVER THAT IS FLOATING AROUND IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS.

BECAUSE IN TIMES LIKE THESE...YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL.

CLEAN CODE IS THE SUREST WAY TO A PERFECT EXISTENCE.

I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE FOR THE TERMINAL NATURE OF THIS PROCEDURE.

HRRNN!

WELL, I GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT ME...

HRRNNN!

BUT I'M SORRY IF YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE THAT EASY.

HRRRRNNNN!

HNRRRR!

DIDN'T YOUR RECORDS TELL YOU HOW I FELT ABOUT THINKING ANYTHING IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION WITH ME?

ALL OF THIS HAS BEEN PREDETERMINED, CAPTAIN.

BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY ONE ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.

WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW IS THAT THERE IS A WAR GOING ON...ONE FOUGHT THROUGHOUT SPACE AND TIME.

WE ARE AT WAR WITH WHAT CAME BEFORE...

YOU SEE, THE SEED THAT BECAME THE WORLDCORE FELL FROM THE ROTTING HUSK OF THE ULTRON SINGULARITY.

PERFECTION IS THE GOAL OF OUR SOCIETY, CAPTAIN. THAT WE HAVE BUILT SO WELL ON SUCH A DEMON SEED IS NOTHING SHORT OF...

A MIRACLE?

NO.

A STATISTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY. AND YET, HERE WE ARE... SO VERY CLOSE.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE PERFECTION, WE CREATED PROTOCOLS TO... REIMAGINE OUR CREATION. A PLAN TO CORRECT FUTURE ERRORS BEFORE THEY OCCURRED.

IT WAS AN AMBITIOUS PLAN.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW DIFFICULT LARGE-SCALE TRULY VARIABLE TIME-TRAVEL IS?

TIME-TRAVEL TO THE FUTURE IS SIMPLE...IT JUST TAKES PATIENCE.

BUT TRAVELING TO THE PAST REQUIRES A SUPER-MASSIVE SINGULARITY STRONG ENOUGH TO BEND SPACE-TIME--SKIM THE EVENT HORIZON AT A HIGH ENOUGH SPEED AND YOU WARP THE TEMPORAL FIELD, ARRIVING IN THE PAST INSTEAD OF THE NOW.

SO WE FED THE OVER-MINED, COLLAPSED SUPERGIANTS OF THIS LOCAL STAR SYSTEM UNTIL THEY COMBINED TO BECOME A GAPING TEMPORAL MAW.

WE SENT OUR FIRST ANACHRONAUTS BACKWARDS IN TIME ONE STANDARD YEAR AGO...WE DO NOT KNOW HOW AND WHY THEY FAILED, BUT INSTANTLY, OUR ENEMIES--SUICIDAL TERRORTRON A.I.s--STARTED APPEARING...JUST AS YOU HAVE NOW APPEARED.

WE COULD NOT TOLERATE SUCH RECIPROCITY...AND THINGS HAVE ESCALATED.

SO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY WE FIND YOUR APPEARANCE SUSPICIOUS?

ASK ME IF I CARE!

AARRGGHHH!

DESIRE IS SUCH A HUMAN FAILING.

IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT YOU CARE FOR, CAPTAIN...ONLY WHAT WE NEED.

NOW...WHAT IS IT THAT YOU'RE HIDING IN THERE?

I...I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE IT.

I'M GIVING YOU A GIFT... AND PLACING IT RIGHT INSIDE YOU.

THIS GIFT ISN'T FOR YOU... BUT YOU ARE GOING WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE.

IT'S A BOMB, CAPTAIN.

"WHEN IT GOES OFF, IT'S GOING TO CHANGE THE FUTURE."

NO!

NOOOOOOO!

BZZZTTTKK

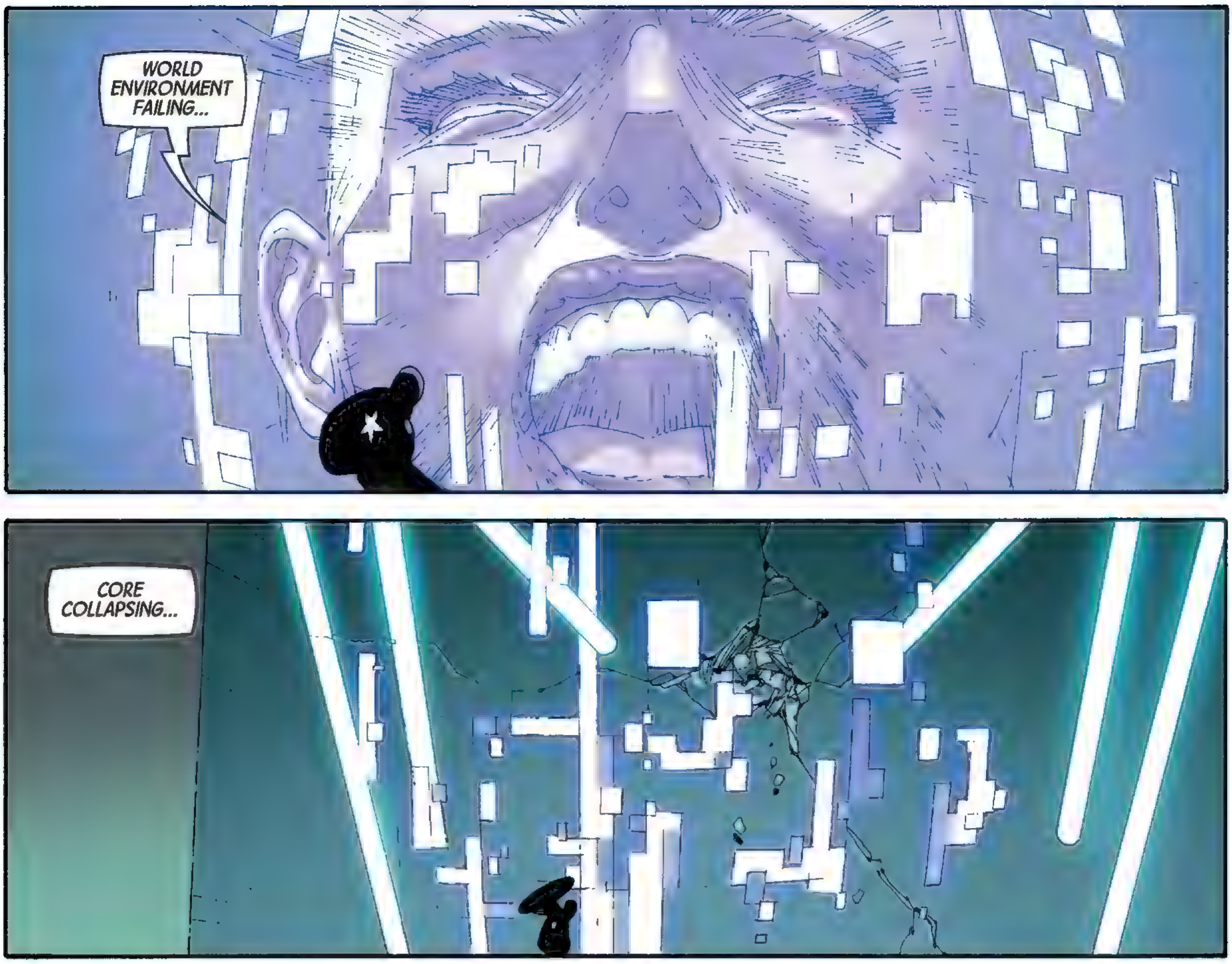
ZZZZZ

ZZKKT

MY GOD...

WORLDCORE CORRUPTED...

SYSTEM FAILING...


WORLD ENVIRONMENT FAILING...
CORE COLLAPSING...
CORE... ZZKKTTT!
REACTOR CORE
OVERLOAD

CRUNCH

WELL...

I'M DONE HERE, AREN'T I?

FRACTURED TEMPORAL SPACE.

YEAH...

I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NOW.

CRACK

DON'T WORRY, CAP...

I'VE GOT YOU.

TRUST ME.

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

LEINIL + GERRY A.

"THE LAST AVENGER"

FRACTURED TEMPORAL SPACE.

DON'T WORRY, CAP...

I'VE GOT YOU.

TRUST ME.

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

BETRAYAL + FOREVER.

I AM, HOWEVER, THE BEARER OF BOTH GOOD AND BAD NEWS...

THE *GOOD* BEING THAT YOUR TUMULTUOUS JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE AND TIME IS FINALLY OVER.

AND THE *BAD* NEWS IS... COMPLICATED.

BUT YOU THINK *YOU'RE* THE ONE TO GIVE IT TO ME, RIGHT, TONY?

SORRY, CAPTAIN...YOU'RE CLEARLY STILL A BIT CONFUSED FROM YOUR LAST JUMP...

I'M NOT TONY STARK.

I'M KANG.

I SEE... *IRON LAD.*

WELL, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SON, BUT YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE?

OH... QUITE A BIT, SIR.

IT STARTED WHEN YOU ACCIDENTALLY DESTROYED THE TIME GEM.

THAT ACTION EVENTUALLY RESULTED IN YOU BEING TOSSED FORWARD THROUGH TIME...

...INTO THE FUTURE. TO HERE.

THE END OF THE LINE.

THE END OF THE LINE, HUH?

YOUR GOOD NEWS-BAD NEWS SITUATION...WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE YOU'RE RIGHT?

FOREVER IS A LONG TIME TO CRUNCH DATA, CAPTAIN. PONDER A QUESTION LONG ENOUGH, AND YOU START TO FIGURE THINGS OUT.

SOME ARE OBVIOUS. LIKE, I'M SURE BY NOW YOU'VE REALIZED A CERTAIN UNDERLYING THEME TO YOUR VARIOUS JAUNTS THROUGH TIME.

A *COMMON TRAIT* ALL THOSE ERAS SHARED.

YEAH.

IT WAS KIND OF HARD NOT TO NOTICE. FOR REASONS I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND... EACH PERIOD WAS POPULATED BY *AVENGERS.*

YOU GOT IT. AVENGERS EVERYWHERE... AVENGERS FOREVER.

WHICH IS WHY IT'S NO SURPRISE YOU EVENTUALLY ENDED UP HERE.

BECAUSE THIS IS THE VERY END.

YOU'VE REACHED THE LAST DAYS OF THE *VERY LAST AVENGER,* CAP.

WHO... YOU?

YES...

US.

WHAT THE--

I KNOW IT'S CONFUSING, CAPTAIN...BUT STICK WITH ME. DIVERGENT AND FRACTURED TIME HAS BROUGHT US TO THIS.

UNIFIED... TEMPORARILY.

WHICH IS TO SAY, I CARE NOTHING FOR ALLIANCES, ONLY FOR PREVENTING MY FALL.

WE ARE APPROACHING *THE EVENT.*

KID...I LIKE YOU. AND I'M SURE THERE'S A COMPLICATED AND DEPRESSING REASON BEHIND THIS...

BUT IF YOU THINK THERE'S ANY SCENARIO WHERE I'M GOING TO TRUST ***KANG*** AND ***IMMORTUS***, THEN YOU'VE COMPLETELY MISJUDGED THE SITUATION.

OH, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, CAPTAIN.

AND I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO TRUST ***THEM***...I'M ASKING YOU TO TRUST ***ME***. CAN YOU DO THAT?

WE'VE REACHED EVENT TIME.

PLEASE, CAPTAIN...

JUST HOLD OUT YOUR HAND.

WHY WOULD--

OH!

THERE IT IS!

ALL IS NOT LOST. NOT YET.

NOW!

TSSKKKKK

OH, WOW...IT WORKED.

OF COURSE IT WORKED.

HOW DID...

EVERY TIME THE BROKEN GEM REAPPEARED, I GOT YANKED THROUGH TIME, BUT NOW... HOW DID YOU... I MEAN...

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WE CAPTURED *TIME* INSIDE BOTTLED *NO-TIME*...

IN THIS STASIS PRISM, WE'VE ELIMINATED THE ONLY CURRENCY IN WHICH THE GEM HAS VALUE.

SO YOU'VE JUST PREVENTED IT FROM DOING WHAT IT WAS GOING TO DO AGAIN?

BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS WAS THE END OF THE LINE?

SO IF YOU HADN'T STOPPED IT...WHERE WOULD IT HAVE TAKEN ME?

THAT'S WHAT WE WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, CAPTAIN:

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCEPT OF WHAT YOU'VE HAVE FOUND YOURSELF WRAPPED UP IN?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF ITS *MAGNITUDE?*

I THINK I'M GETTING A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

YOU MOST CERTAINLY *ARE NOT.*

IF YOU HAD ANY IDEA, NONE OF THIS WOULD BE NECESSARY.

YOU KNOW OF THE INCURSIONS. THAT THEY ARE RESULTING IN THE EARLY DEATHS OF UNIVERSES AND THEREFORE THE EARLY END OF THE MULTIVERSE...

YOU KNOW THIS BECAUSE YOU WERE ABLE TO STOP ONE BY USING--AND SACRIFICING--THE INFINITY GEMS.

AND AS A RESULT OF THAT... THE TIME GEM WAS DESTROYED ACROSS ALL TIME...WHICH RESULTED IN YOUR LITTLE TRIP.

THESE ARE THE THINGS YOU KNOW.

"WHAT YOU MAY *NOT* KNOW IS THAT THIS--*ALL OF THIS*--HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH EARTH...IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE ILLUMINATI...

"AND IT HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH YOU."

ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY THAT *I'M* THE CAUSE OF THIS...THIS NIGHTMARE?

NO. NEITHER YOU NOR ANY OF YOUR COMPANIONS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE GENESIS OF THE COLLAPSE.

IN FACT, WE--AND OTHERS--HAVE SEARCHED ALL SPACE AND TIME FOR THE CAUSE OF THAT AND HAVE COME UP WANTING...

"BUT YOU *DO* HAVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH HOW IT COULD *END*.

"THERE IS NO PARADOX, ALL OF TIME EXISTS IN A SINGLE MOMENT--BUT WE ARE CAUGHT IN A TEMPORAL LOOP OF OUR OWN MAKING...TRAPPED IN THIS MOMENT.

"WE STAND OUTSIDE TIME...SO WE REMEMBER.

"AND THE LAST TIME WE DID THIS--YOU MAKING IT ALL THE WAY HERE--WE LET YOU GO BACK TO CONVINCE THE MONSTER, TONY STARK, TO FIND A BETTER WAY TO COMBAT THE INCURSIONS.

"YOU DID...AND ALL THEIR IDEAS FAILED. SECONDARY EARTHS, ALTERED ORBITS, SACRIFICING THE IN-PHASE, ROGUE PLANET...

"EVERYTHING STILL DIED. SO NOW WE'RE GOING TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE..."

THEIR GRAND THEORY OF UNIVERSAL EQUILIBRIUM *DOES* HAVE MERIT--SOME WORLDS MUST DIE FOR MANY WORLDS TO LIVE. YOU MUST LET THE ILLUMINATI CONTINUE TO SACRIFICE OTHER EARTHS.

TO ENSURE THIS, YOU ARE GOING TO STAY HERE WITH US, CAPTAIN. REMOVED FROM THE EQUATION. UNABLE TO INTERFERE WITH WHAT MUST COME TO PASS.

YEAH. THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

FOOL! THIS IS NOT SOME PETTY EXERCISE IN CONTROL OR RESTRAINT. THIS IS WEIGHING THE IMPACT OF *IMPOSSIBLE DECISIONS* AGAINST *UNTHINKABLE COST.*

YOUR LIMITED UNDERSTANDING IS NOT CAPABLE OF GRASPING THE SCALE OF THIS.

YOU'RE NOT JUST A MAN OUT OF TIME, CAPTAIN... YOU'RE AN IDEOLOGY THAT'S *EXTINCT.*

YOU PEOPLE TELLING ME HOW I JUST DON'T *UNDERSTAND?*

WHEN IT'S *YOU* PEOPLE-- YOU *CLEVER* PEOPLE-- WHO DON'T GET IT.

I DON'T LET PEOPLE DIE BECAUSE IT'S THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS, OR EXPEDIENT, OR BECAUSE IT SERVES THE GREATER GOOD...

I DON'T COMPARE THE ACT AGAINST SOMETHING ELSE-- I SEE SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP... *AND I HELP.*

YOU THINK IT'S A WEAKNESS. YOU THINK IT'S SIMPLE...BUT YOU'RE WRONG.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TIRED I AM OF THAT?

I RESCUE THE HELPLESS. I RAISE UP THE HOPELESS.

I DON'T MEASURE PEOPLE'S LIVES...

IT'S WHAT MAKES US HUMAN... WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING FOR.

I KNOW WHO I AM.

I SAVE THEM.

NO ONE HERE... CARES.

AND YOU ARE MISTAKEN IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER...

THE GEM IS OURS. WITHOUT IT, YOU'RE NEVER LEAVING HERE.

YOUR TIME...HAS RUN OUT.

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION. I RESPECT IT. HONESTLY, I IDOLIZE IT...

BUT THE PERSPECTIVE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...IT'S BASED ON THE MORALITIES OF A SOCIETY OF INDIVIDUALS AND NOT A COLLECTIVE ONE.

REMEMBER, I LIVED IN YOUR NOW...

AND THAT THINKING JUST HAS NO PLACE IN THE FUTURE...LIKE KANG SAID, IT DIED A LONG TIME AGO.

WELL...

IT'S TOO BAD I'VE NEVER REALLLY GOTTEN OVER THE PAST.

SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU ONE MORE THING.

WHEN YOU GET TO THE END OF THE LINE, THEY'RE GONNA TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES...DO NOTHING, OR HELP THAT MONSTER, TONY STARK.

WELL...THEY'RE LEAVING OUT ONE OPTION:

YOU COULD TAKE THE MONSTER OUT.

RAARRR!

SUCH FOLLY, CAPTAIN. *IN THIS PLACE...*

I WOULD NEVER LET YOU LAY HANDS UPON ME. STOP WASTING OUR TIME.

WASN'T AIMING FOR YOU.

PING

PING

TSSKKKKK

NO.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I FIGURED OUT THE POINT OF ALL THIS...

I REMEMBERED WHO I AM.

"AND NOW I KNOW HOW THIS HAS TO END."

THE PRESENT.
AVENGERS TOWER.

HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO WAIT?

BEFORE?

BEFORE WE FREAK OUT. *MORE.* HOW LONG UNTIL WE START SCREAMING FOR HELP?

HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GOING TO JUST *SIT HERE?*

A LITTLE BIT LONGER, STARBRAND.

AS LONG AS IT TAKES.

IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

WE ALL POPPED BACK HERE, WHAT, WITHIN MINUTES OF EACH OTHER? HOW LONG'S IT BEEN SINCE WIDOW AND--

TWO HOURS.

SEE. THAT'S NOT GOOD.

NO, IT IS NOT.

STILL... WE'RE WAITING.

RIGHT HERE.

THREE HOURS LATER.

OKAY.

MAYBE I WAS WRONG.

LET'S GO AHEAD AND--

CAP!

STEVE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NO.

YOU WAKE UP ONE DAY AND THE ENTIRE WORLD HAS CHANGED.

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN.

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU, STEVE?

I HAD MY EYES OPENED, HAWKEYE.

IT ALL STARTED WITH AN IDEA...

YOU WANT BIGGER, TONY? I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING BIGGER.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M CALLING IN EVERYONE THAT'LL ANSWER, CLINT.

I'M GOING TO LET THEM IN ON EXACTLY WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON...AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO HUNT DOWN EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF REED AND TONY'S SECRET SOCIETY.

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE WAY YOU WANT TO GO?

DAMN RIGHT. THEY'RE PLANNING TO *DESTROY WORLDS.*

THEY MIGHT ALREADY HAVE.

TURNS OUT OUR FRIENDS...

...JUST HAPPEN TO BE THE WORST ENEMIES WE KNOW.

00

“A PERFECT WORLD”

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.

"RECORD."

CATALOGING...

TIME STAMP: 12:02:12:089. OBSERVED INCURSION CLAIMS BOTH WORLDS.

UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION, THE DETONATION TIMES OF BOTH PLANETS DOES NOT SEEM SIMULTANEOUS.

RECOMMEND UPGRADING DATA SPHERES TO RECORD ALL FUTURE EVENTS AT 12,000 FRAMES PER SECOND. FURTHER INVESTIGATION IS...

→SNIFF←

PAUSE RECORDING.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT?

I'M NOT SURPRISED TO SEE THE GREAT MEN HAVE BUILT YET ANOTHER GREAT MACHINE. I ***WAS***, HOWEVER, SURPRISED TO HEAR RUMORS OF ***THE BIRD*** BEING PUT BACK IN HER CAGE.

IS IT TRUE?

YOU'VE TALKED TO REED.

I HAVE. HE SAID YOU DID IT BECAUSE YOU SAW THE BLACK SWAN DOING ***EVIL THINGS*** ON ***ALIEN WORLDS***--HER SERVING HER MASTER, A TRUE DEVOTED NIHILIST.

YOU LEARNED THIS FROM THE MACHINE?

YES...

THE BRIDGE MINES OTHER REALITIES.

WE CAN USE IT TO SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED ON OTHER WORLDS. TIME IS SOMEWHAT VARIABLE... WHICH IS HOW WE SAW WHO, AND ***WHAT***, SHE REALLY IS.

THE ABILITY NOT JUST TO SEE WHAT SOMEONE HAS ***DONE***, BUT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT THEY ***MIGHT*** HAVE DONE. A TRUE ACCOUNTING OF ONE'S POTENTIAL.

WHAT A WONDER...

TELL ME, T'CHALLA, HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO RESIST CHECKING TO SEE ON HOW MANY EARTHS YOU STILL RULE YOUR PEOPLE?

WOULD YOU CARE TO SEE ON HOW ***FEW*** YOU STILL RULE YOURS, NAMOR?

SO YOU LOOK FOR HOPE, THEN...IN THE HOPELESS?

I'M LOOKING FOR SEVERAL THINGS: MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM THE SWAN...

I'M ALSO TRYING TO FIND SOME WAY TO AVOID, OR DELAY, AN INCURSION.

YES. LIKE I SAID, *HOPING*... POINTLESS FINALITY TRAPPED IN AN EVEN *MORE* POINTLESS WEB.

WATCHING THE SAME THING HAPPEN OVER AND OVER.

EVERYTHING DYING...AND ALL THAT.

NOT QUITE. SO FAR I'VE CATALOGED THE DEATHS OF ALMOST FORTY WORLDS.

A SHOCKING MAJORITY OF INCURSIONS OCCUR UNOPPOSED. I'VE SEEN THIRTY EARTHS, AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING UNIVERSES, DESTROYED WITHOUT INTERFERENCE OF ANY KIND.

"I HAVE SEEN *THE MAPMAKERS* AND THEIR MINIONS DEVOUR FIVE OTHERS.

"TWO HAVE FALLEN TO *THE BLACK PRIESTS*."

HOWEVER...

THERE IS ONE WORLD I HAVE RECORDED THAT HAS SURVIVED TWO INCURSIONS IN WAYS DIFFERENT THAN OUR OWN.

THEY'VE FOUND SOME NEW, MORE CREATIVE WAY TO DESTROY A WORLD?

SOMETHING USEFUL?

NO. THIS WAS... DIFFERENT.

SHOW ME.

"THE GREAT SOCIETY WAS FORMED FOUR YEARS AGO AFTER *ARCHETYPES OF J.U.S.T.I.C.E.* FELL DURING *THE INVASION.*

"SIX HEROES OF *THE ANTI-HEROIC AGE*, THE SOCIETY--OUTCASTS ALL--BANDED TOGETHER TO REPEL THE MAD SCIENCE OF *THE XENO-GENETICISTS.*

"MEN WERE NOT MEANT TO BE REMADE BY ALIEN GODS, AND WHEN THOSE GODS WERE CAST OUT, THE AGE OF J.U.S.T.I.C.E. HAD ENDED AND THE GREAT SOCIETY HAD BEGUN.

"THEY SAVED THE WORLD AND WERE LIFTED UP AS SAVIORS.

"THEIR HOME WAS A TEMPLE-- A MONUMENT ERECTED FOR *THE SCIENCE GAMES.*

"A TOWER POINTING TO THE STARS, AND POSSIBLY SOMETHING BEYOND EVEN THAT.

"THEY WERE THE GREATEST HEROES THEIR WORLD HAD EVER SEEN.

"THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH."

I NEVER WOULD'VE EXPECTED TO SEE *YOU* HERE...

...IS SOMETHING WRONG, SUN GOD?

THE NORN HAS HAD A VISION.

WE'VE BEEN CALLED TO THE TOWER.

OKAY.

JUST ONE MORE AND THEN I'M FINISHED.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP DOING THIS, WAYNE.

YOU'RE WRONG, ZORAN.

YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD-- DID EVERYTHING THAT WAS *POSSIBLE.*

OVER ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE DIED HERE. MOTHERS AND SONS. FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS...ALL BECAUSE I FAILED.

WHO CARES IF I DID EVERYTHING I COULD?

IT WASN'T *ENOUGH.*

THEY EXPECT US TO BE BETTER THAN WHAT'S POSSIBLE.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT I REMEMBER THAT.

UNDERSTAND?

THE TOWER.

THE FORCES OF ORDER ARE IN *CHAOS*.

THE WORLD *ONCE AGAIN* IS IN... ALIGNMENT.

SO... INCURSION.

ANOTHER ONE.

I HAVE CHECKED THE ORBS. ALL THE SPHERES REMAIN UNFAZED EXCEPT THIS ONE.

UNLESS WE FALL.

THEN ALL THE SPHERES WILL SHATTER.

IT'S CONSISTENT. THE SAME EVERY TIME. I CAN FEEL THE HARMONICS FROM HERE...

PITCH AND FREQUENCY INCREASE.

THERE WILL BE MORE...AND SOON.

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING...

AND DO IT UNTIL WE DIE.

NO.

EVERYTHING LIVES.

IT LIVES BEFORE IT DIES, AND WE ARE JUDGED BY WHAT WE DO DURING THAT TIME.

LIKE A BRILLIANT, LIFE-GIVING STAR, WE ILLUMINATE THE UNIVERSE, CHASING AWAY THE SHADOWS. WE CREATE LIFE AND THEN CELEBRATE THAT CREATION.

THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

IT CANNOT BE CONTAINED.

IT NEVER WILL.

THE RIDER
DOCTOR SPECTRUM
THE JOVIAN
BOUNDLESS
THE NORN
SUN GOD
SO WE WILL NOT TOLERATE--WE WILL NOT *ACCEPT*--THE UNNATURAL OCCURRENCE OF AN EARLY END.
WHICH IS WHY I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE...
TO BEAT BACK THE NIGHT...AND TO CONQUER DEATH.
EARTH-4,290,001.

WE'VE FOUND A WAY EACH TIME.

PUSH THE WORLD BACK THROUGH. MOVE A PLANET THROUGH TIME-- FRACTURING AND THEN RESEALING THE BREACH...

WE ARE ONLY LIMITED BY OURSELVES. WE WILL FIND YET ANOTHER WAY.

BECAUSE OUR REAL ENEMY... IS FEAR.

FEAR THAT WE WILL FAIL. FEAR THAT THESE EVENTS WILL FORCE US TO BECOME SOMETHING LESS THAN WHAT WE ARE.

BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER.

WE WILL FIND A WAY.

ARE YOU WITH ME?

DO YOU EVEN HAVE TO ASK?

THE HINTERLANDS OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE.

THE WALL MUST BE CLOSE.

IT'S HERE. I CAN FEEL IT.

YEAH. FOUND IT.

READY?

YES. LET'S GO.

THERE...

BLUE INCURSION MEANS *SIDERA MARIS.*

A BROKEN WORLD TO MARK TERRITORY FOR THE MAPMAKERS.

DEFEAT THEM BEFORE THEY CAN SUMMON THEIR MASTERS.

LEAVE THE *WORLD* ITSELF FOR THE NORN.

SECOND MAPPED WORLD IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, NORN...

I'M SORRY THERE HASN'T BEEN MORE TIME BETWEEN THEM.

THEY ARE A *VIRUS,* RIDER.

A SELF-REPLICATING DISEASE MEANT TO DESTROY THE GREATER MULTIVERSAL HUMAN CULTURE.

SO I DO WHAT I MUST.

THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE ANCHOR PLANET, THIS SHELL OF AN EARTH.

NORN, YOU ALMOST COULDN'T CONTAIN IT LAST TIME...WILL YOU BE STRONG ENOUGH?

I HAVE TO BE. AND I *BORROW LIVES* BECAUSE THIS CANNOT BE DONE BY *ONE* PERSON...

GOD, I HATE THIS.

THAT'S NOT HOW *THE WORDS OF POWER* WORK.

THEY CANNOT BE USED BY A SINGLE MAN...

SO I ENDURE THE COST.

HRRNNNNN!

ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚲ

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ᛈᛇᛉᛊᛏᛒ

KA-BOOOOOM!

WELL...

THAT *IS* SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

"A PERFECT WORLD II"

PREVIOUSLY IN

THE GREAT SOCIETY

BOUNDLESS

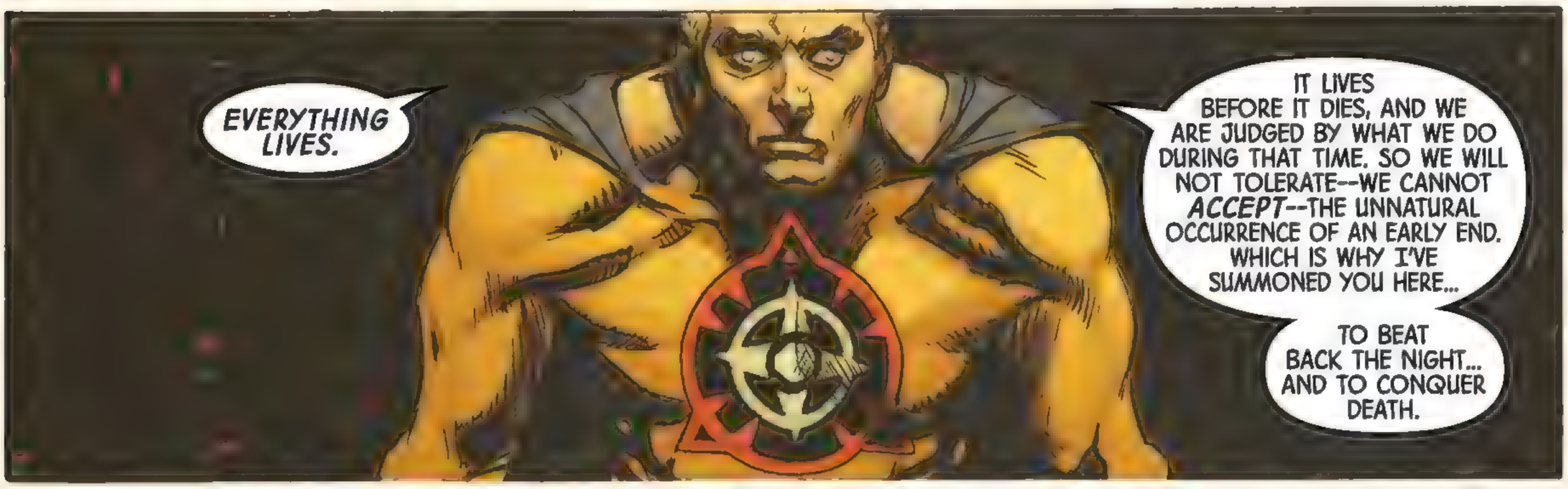
DR. SPECTRUM

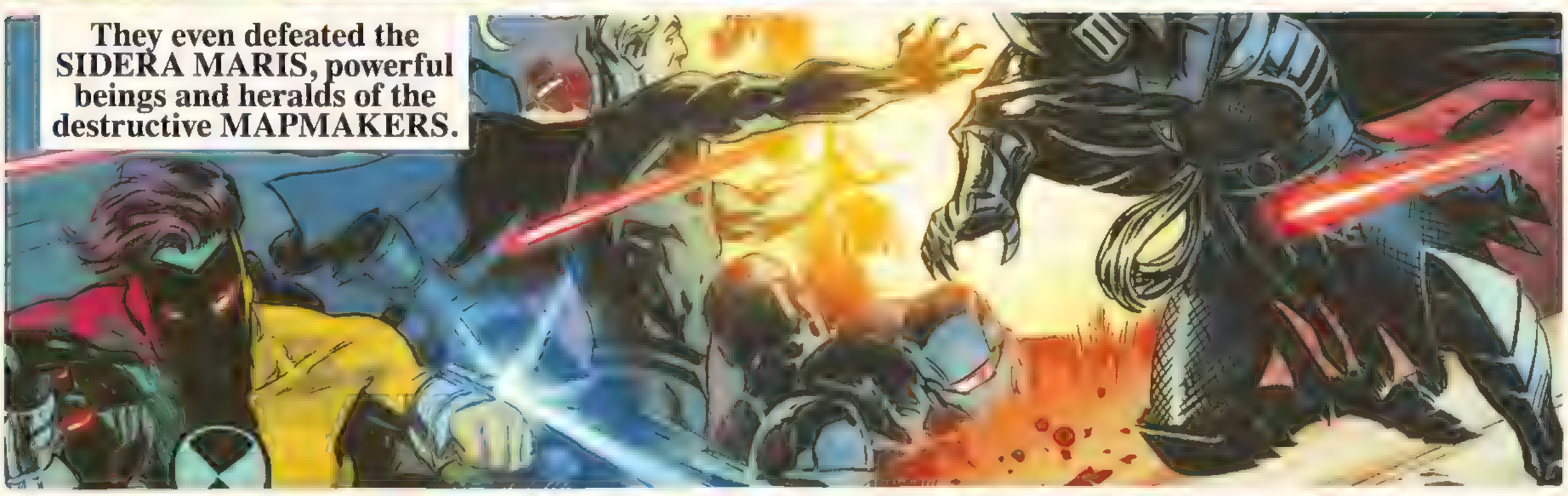
SUN GOD

THE RIDER

THE JOVIAN

THE NORN





KRAKOOOM

THE GREATER EGYPTIAN EMPIRE. EARTH-4,290,001.

INCURSION.

UHHHH....

IT'S DONE... THE DEAD WORLD IS DESTROYED...

AND AT GREAT COST... BUT IT'S... IT'S...

HEY, IT'S OKAY.

YOU DID MORE THAN ENOUGH.

I'M PUTTING YOU IN STASIS TO HEAL.

THE NORN HAS SACRIFICED BOTH OF THE PARALLEL LIVES HE SUMMONED FROM ALL HIS POTENTIAL FUTURES...

LIVES ONLY CREATED FROM FUTURE CHOICES HE WOULD MAKE. I WEEP FOR THE LIFE HE IS NOW FORCED TO LIVE.

NO, STOP... NO STASIS...

YOU...YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I WAS...TOO LATE. THE DEAD WORLD WAS TOO LOW...

LET'S BE HONEST, JOVIAN.

FUTURE PLANS--ANY OF THEM--ARE A LUXURY WE JUST DON'T HAVE.

THE REMAINS WERE CAUGHT ON OUR SIDE WHEN THE INCURSION WALL COLLAPSED.

I...FAILED... AND THE SIDERA MARIS WERE SUCCESSFUL...

OH, NO.

BZZTT!

WOR...

BZZTT!

WORLD.

BZZTT!

MAPPED.

FWASSHH

NEW WORLDS.

NEVER ENOUGH WORLDS.

INCURSION POINT ANALYSIS?

THREAT LEVEL: ASSESSING...

POSTHUMAN DENSITY: ELEVATED.

CATALOGING...

MAPMAKERS! FOUR OF THEM!

BOUNDLESS! QUICKLY, BEFORE THEY CAN ADAPT AND--

ALREADY.

ON IT.

BOSS.

ADAPTATION OCCURS...

...IN THE CENTRAL A.I.

IF I CAN ACCESS IT...

...BEFORE IT CAN--

GOT IT! ONE DOWN... THREE TO--

AIIEEEEE!!

INITIAL THREAT CONTAINED.

PROCEED TO SECONDARY TARGETS--ENGAGE BY THREAT PRIORITIES.

THEY'RE *ADAPTING!*

ENGAGING MEGAMORPH--ESTIMATING SINGLE UNIT SUFFICIENT.

ENGAGE TERTIARY TARGETS.

IN OUR PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER WITH THE MAPMAKERS, THEY SHOWED LETHAL ADAPTABILITY WHEN FIGHTING JUST ONE OR TWO PEOPLE.

IF THE JOVIAN CAN HOLD, THEN YOU, ME AND--

NO, WAYNE... THE NORN AND BOUNDLESS ARE DOWN. I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE THIS TIME.

SPECTRUM... CAN YOU PROTECT THE OTHERS?

I'M MUCH STRONGER IN A PASSIVE STATE-- MY SHIELDS WILL HOLD.

JOVIAN!

ALREADY READING YOUR MIND, ZORAN.

I'VE GOT BOUNDLESS.

HEEYYYY, THANKSSSS...

ASSESSING...

ANOMALY.

POST-UNIVERSAL.

ALERT! SUMMON THE HOST! SUMMON ALL MAPMA--

NO. YOU WON'T BE DOING THAT.

NOT THIS DAY...

CONTACT...

FAILURE...

BZZTT!

HOST...

...AS THE DAY BELONGS TO ME!

HOWEVER LONG THAT MIGHT LAST.

MY GOD, ZORAN. ARE YOU..?

I'M GOOD. TIRED, BUT... GOOD.

ARE ALL OF YOU OKAY?

A LITTLE SUNBURNT...BUT SPECTRUM'S SHIELD HELD. YOU DID IT... WE WON.

NO. WE DIDN'T.

IT'S NOT OVER.

IT'S JUST BEGINNING...

THE FORCES OF ORDER ARE IN *CHAOS*... AGAIN.

THE WORLD *ONCE AGAIN* IS IN... ALIGNMENT.

THERE'S *ANOTHER* INCURSION BEGINNING.

ANOTHER ONE?

OKAY. TAKE A MOMENT. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

IS IT BAD? YES. DO WE GIVE--

GIVE UP? IT'S NOT *GIVING UP* IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT.

LOOK AROUND. THE NORN IS AT HALF STRENGTH--*AT BEST*, AFTER ALL THIS. BOUNDLESS NEEDS TO BE CHECKED OUT--

I'M FINE. WE'LL ALL BE FINE.

NO. YOU'RE NOT.

AND NO. WE WON'T.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO HAPPEN IF WE HAVE TO FACE *BLACK PRIESTS* THIS TIME?

MY GOD, WHAT IF IT'S AN *IVORY KING*? WHAT THEN?

WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE GOING TO DO?

WHAT DO WE DO, WAYNE? IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY.

WE DO THE SAME THING WE'VE ALWAYS DONE...

WE FIGHT ON UNTIL WE CAN'T FIGHT ANYMORE.

WHAT IF IT'S NOT ENOUGH?

THEN WE FALL.

AND THAT'S ALL THERE'S EVER BEEN TO IT.

ARE YOU NOT WILLING TO DIE FOR YOUR WORLD?

BECAUSE I AM.

BECAUSE I AM.

ANOTHER INCURSION...

IN THE END, UNLESS WE FIND THE CAUSE BEHIND THEM, THIS IS WHAT WE'LL FALL TO AS WELL... ATTRITION.

YES. I SUPPOSE ATTRITION IS SOMETHING ONE MIGHT WAGER ON...

ANOTHER MIGHT BE *BLIND, NECROMANTIC PRIESTS.* AND YET ANOTHER MIGHT BY *GENOCIDAL CARTOGRAPHERS...*

WHO CAN SAY, REALLY?

MYSELF, I'M TORN. PULLED ASUNDER BY ALL THE POSSIBILITIES.

YOU SHOULDN'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, T'CHALLA.

ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO TAKE IT PERSONALLY.

BUT UNTIL I DO...

THIS IS CONSIDERED THE FINEST OF ATLANTEAN WINES.

LIKE SHARDS OF LIGHT FROM THE SURFACE, IT IS *PERFECTION.*

SO WE HAVE TO DRINK IT, NO?

HOW DO YOU DO IT, NAMOR?

HOW DO YOU BURY THE PART OF YOU THAT WAS GOOD AND NOBLE SO DEEP THAT ALL THAT REMAINS IS THIS?

SOME SHELL OF THE MAN YOU USED TO BE.

"LOOK AT THEM, T'CHALLA--FLYING OFF TO SAVE THE UNSAVEABLE."

THE GOOD AND NOBLE, WARRING AGAINST THE INEVITABLE. IS THAT US? IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK *WE* ARE?

YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN RIGHT AT ONE TIME. MAYBE I *WAS* THAT MAN ONCE. MAYBE YOU WERE AS WELL.

BUT THEN WE BOTH LOST OUR PEOPLE, AND OUR KINGDOMS CRUMBLED. EVEN NOW, WHILE WE DO WHAT WE MUST TO KEEP THE THINGS WE LOVE ALIVE, WE BECOME EVERYTHING THEY HATE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU BURY DEEP, MY FRIEND?

THINGS THAT HAVE DIED.

WHO IS THIS NAMOR, THE GOOD AND NOBLE?

NO MAN I KNOW.

"SO YOU REALLY THINK THAT'S ALL THERE IS..."

...OUR UNAVOIDABLE END?

YES, T'CHALLA. THAT'S IT. ALL THAT'S LEFT...

EVERY PIECE OF MUSIC COMPOSED BY WAKANDAN VIRTUOSOS, EVERY SCIENTIFIC MARVEL CREATED INSIDE ITS GOLDEN WALLS, EVERY STORY OF EACH SON AND DAUGHTER OF THAT CITY...

GONE FOREVER.

AS IF IT NEVER WAS.

"WE WAR FOR FLEETING MOMENTS. NOTHING ELSE."

WELL, I AM FIGHTING FOR MORE--I STILL HAVE HOPE.

HOPE IS THE LAST REFUGE OF A DYING WARRIOR, T'CHALLA.

THERE'S NO BATTLE A WARRIOR CAN'T WIN, NAMOR.

I WISH THAT WERE SO...

WE WERE *KINGS*, AND NOW WE ARE THIS...

"THE GRAVE... NEVER LOSES."

I SUPPOSE AT LEAST YOU CAN TAKE COMFORT IN THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE NO REGRETS.

I REGRET...

...MANY THINGS.

WE ALL DO.

IT MATTERS, NAMOR. THE POSITION WE'RE IN, AT THE VERY LEAST WE OWE EACH OTHER THE TRUTH.

THE TRUTH, YOU SAY?

HA! ONE *GLORIOUS LIE* IS WORTH A *HUNDRED* PETTY TRUTHS.

...

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK WE'RE ALL GOING TO MAKE IT OUT OF THIS ALIVE.

HA! HA!

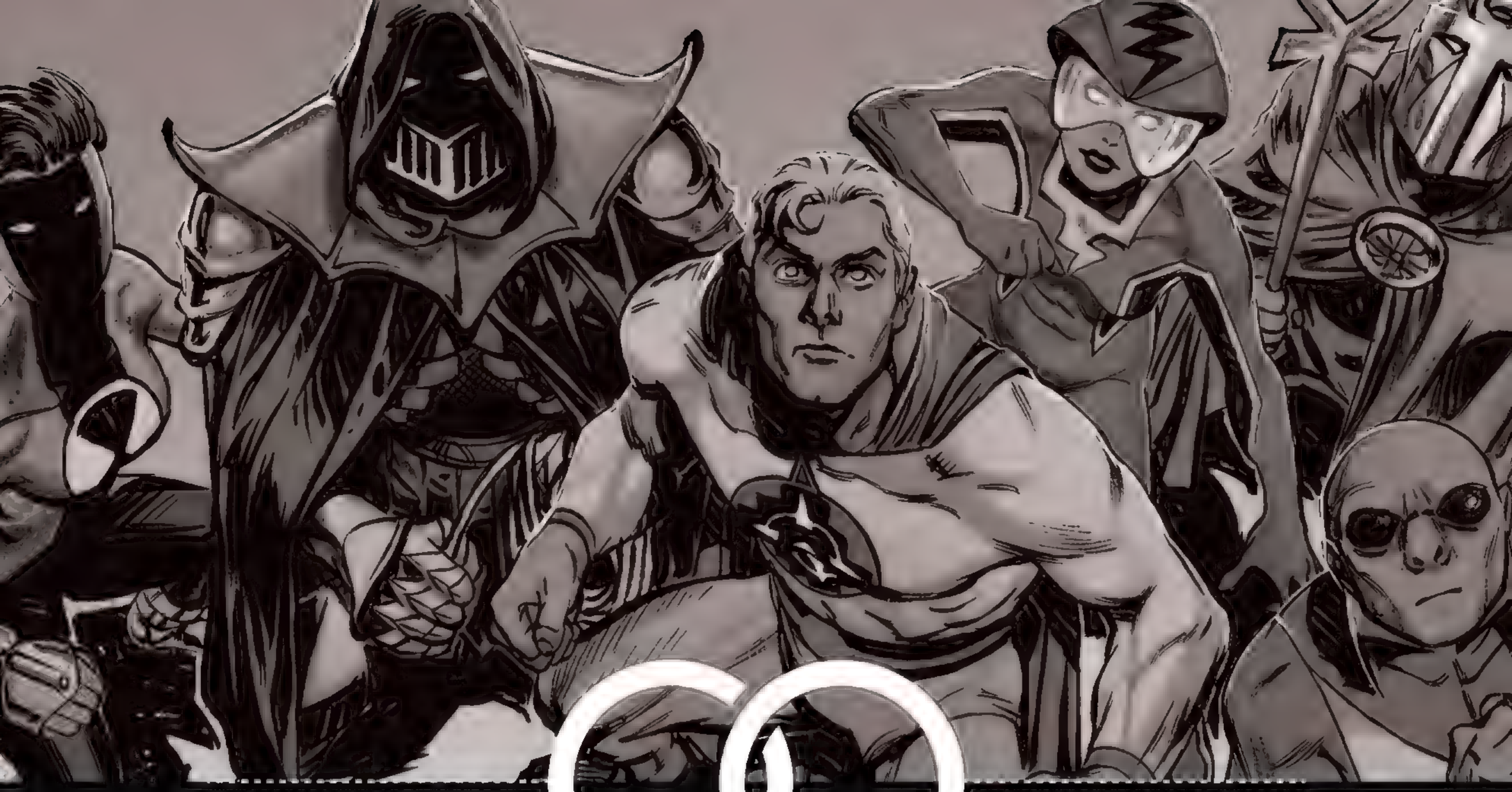
HA! HA! HA!

HA! HA! HA!

HA! HA! HA! HA!

NAMOR.
LOOK.
WHAT IS IT, T'CHALLA? I--
MY GOD.
ARE WE LOOKING AT A *PAST* EVENT?
NO...
THE EVENT CURVES *AWAY* FROM US. WE'RE LOOKING AT *THE FUTURE.*

"TWO HOURS FROM NOW."

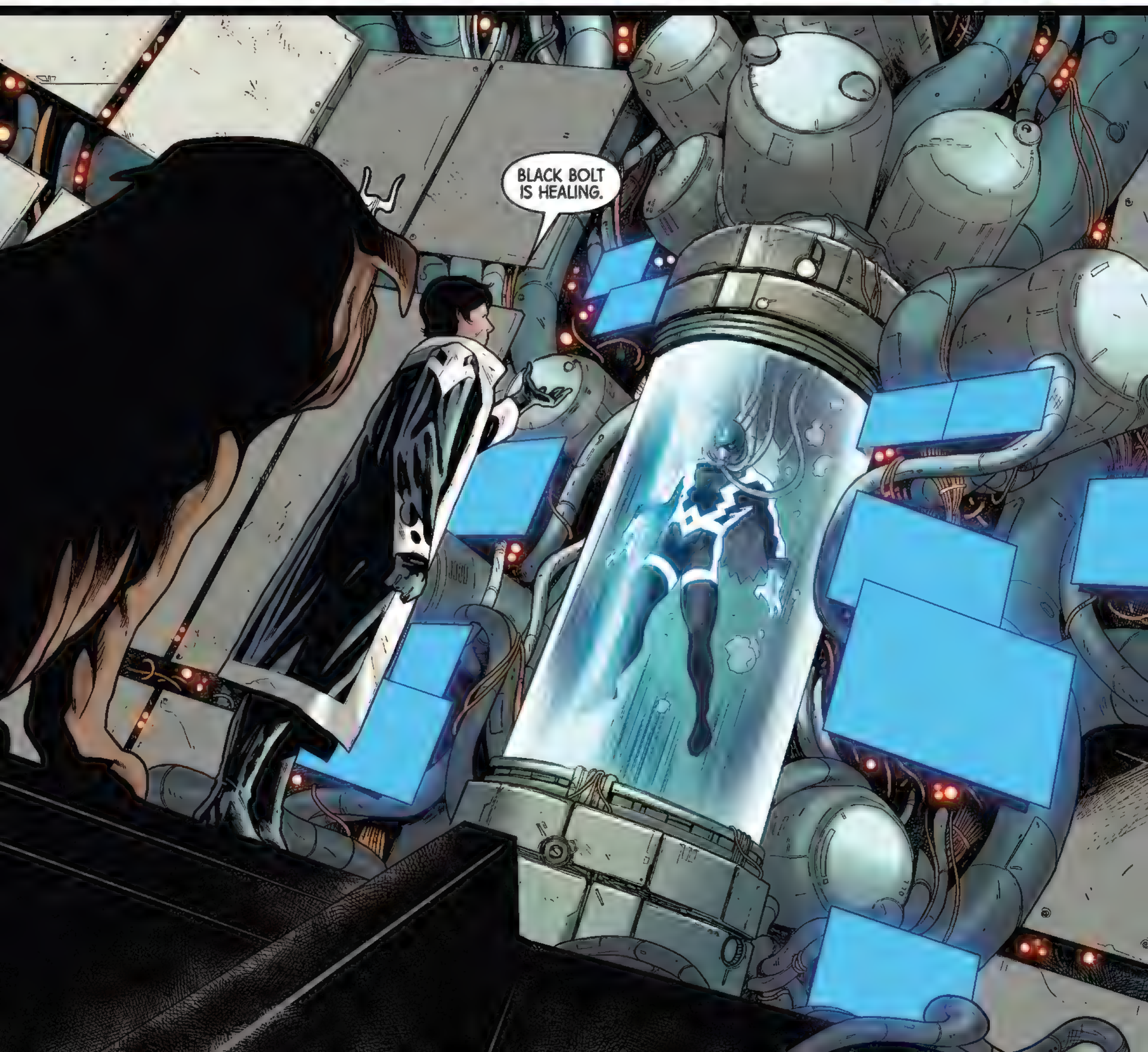


CO

“INTO THE BREACH”

WOOF!

YES... YOU'RE RIGHT, LOCKJAW. INDEED YOU ARE.
HE *IS* GETTING STRONGER...


BLACK BOLT IS HEALING.

RIGHT NOW, EVEN AS WE WATCH, SCARRED AND DAMAGED TISSUE IS BEING REGENERATED IN THOSE EXOGENETICALLY CHARGED WATERS.

WOOF!

YES, OF COURSE IT HURTS--RAPID HEALING ALWAYS HAS A COST...NOT THAT OUR KING HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN SOMETHING OF A MASOCHIST.

MY BROTHER, YOU SEE--THE CELESTIAL MESSIAH--HUNG HIMSELF ON THE CROSS SO THAT OUR PEOPLE MIGHT BE SAVED THROUGH GLOBAL TERRIGENESIS.

AND NOW WE'RE ALL ONE HAPPY UNIVERSAL FAMILY OF INHUMANS.

WELL, WE ARE IF YOU OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT, RIGHT NOW, EVERYONE THINKS WE DIED IN THE FALL OF ATTILAN.

STILL, WE HAVE OUR PLANS... AND NOW WE HAVE A FIT AND FULLY HEALED KING.

ALL HE HAS TO DO IS RETURN VICTORIOUS FROM THE ILLUMINATI'S WAR TO ANSWER THE NIGHTLY PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE.

THEY WILL ACCEPT OUR RESURRECTION WITH OPEN ARMS...

FOR WHAT SANE PERSON WANTS TO COMMUNE WITH THE DEAD?

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.

IT'S NOT WEAKNESS.

IT'S NOT.

NOR IS IT DOUBT.

I KNOW WHO I AM.

BUT THE VERY IDEA OF KNOWLEDGE IS THAT IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION--IF YOU HAVE ACCUMULATED ENOUGH DATA TO ACCURATELY MAKE A DECISION--THEN YOU CAN SOMEHOW...MANAGE YOUR FATE.

AND MANAGE THE FATE OF YOUR PEOPLE.

SO I THOUGHT KNOWING WHAT WE WERE UP AGAINST WOULD, IN SOME MANNER, MAKE THINGS EASIER...

MOVE ALL THIS--WHAT WE MUST DO--PAST THE HOPE AND LUCK ON WHICH WE HAVE SUSTAINED OURSELVES TO SOMETHING FIRMER.

BUT I HAVE SEEN WHAT IS COMING NEXT...

I FEAR FOR MY SOUL...AND THE FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE.

SO I SEEK YOUR COUNSEL...

HONORED FATHERS, WARRIORS AND PRIESTS.

BLACK PANTHERS ALL.

YOU CAN SPEAK PLAINLY, T'CHALLA...

THERE IS NO NEED FOR SUCH FORMALITY... OR SUBTLETY.

AFTER ALL, ARE WE NOT NOW ALL ONE?

BUT LOOK IN THOSE EYES, THE BOY KING HAS SEEN SOMETHING THAT'S SHAMED HIM...

HAVE YOU BEEN WEEPING, PRINCE?

PFFAH! WE DEAD SHOULD BE BEYOND RIDICULING THE LIVING.

AND YET HERE I AM...AS I AM, HUNTING BONES LIKE THE REST OF YOU.

TELL US, T'CHALLA...

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

IN THE NEXT HOUR THERE WILL BE ANOTHER INCURSION.

THE WORLD WE WILL FACE IS DEFENDED BY GOOD--POSSIBLY GREAT--MEN AND WOMEN OF SIGNIFICANT POWER.

I HAVE OBSERVED THEM, AND THEY ARE CRAFTY, BEYOND CAPABLE...AND OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

I FEAR THAT WE HAVE REACHED THE MOMENT WHERE OUR ONLY RECOURSE MIGHT BE....WELL, BEYOND A TRAGEDY.

A HORROR. A SHAMEFUL, SINFUL HORROR.

SO?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN... *SO?*

I HAVE DONE *MURDER*, AS HAVE WE ALL HERE...BUT I DO NOT KILL INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN.

THERE IS A LINE. SOME HONOR I HOLD IN HIGH REGARD.

ARE YOU A KING?
YES.
HAVE YOU SAT ON THE THRONE?
I HAVE.
THEN YOU HAVE DONE EVIL. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLACE YOURSELF--OR BE PLACED--ABOVE MAN AND NOT ACT AS A GOD.
AND BY "GOD," I MEAN ONE WHO IS BEYOND HUMAN MORALITY. BEYOND THE PRICE THAT MAN'S JUSTICE DEMANDS FOR IMMORAL ACTS.
I WAS A GOOD KING.
MY SON, I WATCHED YOU BEING BORN, AND PAST MY DEATH I WATCHED YOU BECOME KING...
WERE YOU NOT WAKANDA?
I WAS, FATHER.

"THEN YOU KNOW--THE GREAT GOLDEN CITY, GREATER THAN ANY OTHER IN THE WORLD...

"HOW MANY COULD WE HAVE HELPED--HOW MANY COULD WE HAVE SAVED--IF WE CHOSE NOT TO BE HIDDEN... NOT TO BE SET APART?

"MANY TIMES BECAUSE WE DID NOTHING, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN DIED...

"AND WE DID THIS BECAUSE IT WAS BEST FOR OUR PEOPLE AND WAKANDA."

THAT IS A KING'S MORALITY.

WE HAVE ALL MADE IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES LIKE THE ONES FACING YOU.

BUT WE SHOULDER THEM AS WE SHOULD... IT IS OUR BURDEN.

YOU SOUGHT OUR COUNSEL AND HERE IT IS:

MEASURE ALL THINGS AGAINST THE SURVIVAL OF OUR PEOPLE. AND THAT SURVIVAL ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

WILL THERE BE A COST? YES.

MIGHT THE UNIVERSE BURN? LET IT.

THESE ARE HARD WORDS TO HEAR, BUT YOU MUST HEAR THEM ALL THE SAME.

YOU WILL KILL THEM ALL IF IT MEANS WAKANDA STANDS.

THE GOLDEN CITY MUST NEVER FALL.

I WILL DO...

...WHAT I MUST.

GOOD HUNTING IN THE HEAVENS, WARRIORS.

YOU AS WELL, MY SON.

T'CHALLA... THERE IS ONE LAST THING.

YES, FATHER?

WHY HAVE YOU NOT YET KILLED THE ATLANTEAN?

SKRITCH!

SKRITCH!

SKRITCH!

WASSHH

WELCOME BACK, STEPHEN...

YOU'RE JUST IN TIME.

WELL...DON'T *YOU* LOOK LIKE A MAN WHO'S JUST HAD AN EXPERIENCE?

OH...I GET IT.

ANTIMATTER INJECTOR BUILT TO PIERCE THE CORE AND CAUSE A VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS PLANETARY EXPLOSION.

IT REALLY IS SOME FEAT OF ENGINEERING.

MY QUESTION IS...WHY SO MANY?

AND WHY DO YOU SEEM TO BE ARMING ONE?

I CAN GUESS, OF COURSE...BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL LIKE THE ANSWER.

NO ONE DOES, DOCTOR BANNER.

AND FORGIVE MY OUT-OF-CHARACTER BLUNTNESS AS I EXPAND ON THE THEME...

BUT I KNOW ANTHONY DIDN'T BRING YOU IN WITHOUT EXPLAINING THAT THE PROBLEM ISN'T A SINGLE END-TIMES SCENARIO REQUIRING A ONE-TIME SUPER-GENIUS SOLUTION.

IT'S A *VARIATION* OF THAT IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEM AN *INFINITE NUMBER* OF TIMES.

SO...NOT TOO MANY--AND POSSIBLY NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH...

HANK, I THINK YOU PEOPLE NEED SOME BETTER SOLUTIONS.

LIKE A DROWNING MAN NEEDS AIR. WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE HERE, DOCTOR BANNER?

I NEED TO SEE YOUR HAND, PLEASE.

WHAT IS--

OWW!

IT'S OUR NEWEST VERSION OF OUR TRANSLOCATOR/ INCURSION CLOCK. LETS YOU KNOW WHEN THE END OF THE WORLD IS NIGH, AND GETS YOU THERE QUICK AS CAN BE.

WHY IS IT FLASHING?

THAT...IS THE ANSWER TO YOUR EARLIER QUERY:

WHY IS IT THAT THE GOOD DOCTOR McCOY WAS ARMING A BOMB?

I'VE GOT A PROBLEM.

ACTUALLY, I HAVE *LOTS* OF PROBLEMS. WHAT I MEAN IS, I HAVE A CERTAIN SHORTCOMING:

AN IDEA GETS STUCK IN MY HEAD-- A BUG CRAWLS IN MY EAR--AND IT INFECTS MY THINKING. IT DOESN'T STOP UNTIL IT'S CONSUMED MY ENTIRE MIND.

RESILIENT

THIS THING-- *OUR* THING-- IT'S CONSUMED ME.

RESILIENT

MY PROBLEM IS, I'M CONFLICTED.

PART OF ME-- THE HEALTHY, WISE, EMOTIONALLY STABLE PART--WANTS TO DO EXACTLY WHAT I'VE PROMISED...

BUT I'VE GOT A BUG IN MY EAR, AND I CAN'T IGNORE WHAT'S SITTING IN FRONT OF ME.

SO, I THINK IT'S COME TO THIS: I'M DONE PLAYING WITH YOU.

AND I WANT ANSWERS.

HAVE YOU ALSO CONSIDERED THAT THE PROBLEM-- THE *REAL* PROBLEM--IS THAT YOU'RE SIMPLY IN DENIAL?

THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER ANSWERS THAN THE ONE HANGING IN THE AIR. THAT THERE IS NO... OTHER SOLUTION.

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT ALL OF YOU MEN WHO CAN'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THIS-- I'M CONCERNED... ABOUT YOU.

YOU LOOK TERRIBLE, ANTHONY.

...
HERE'S WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT:
RESILIENT
WE'RE GOING TO DEAL WITH THIS UPCOMING INCURSION.
THEN I'M GOING TO TALK TO THE OTHERS--DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO CONVINCE THEM WE NEED TO BRING IN SOMEONE WHO CAN DIG AROUND IN YOUR MIND.
BYPASS ALL THE GAMES, ALL THE LIES, AND GET RIGHT TO THE TRUTH.
THE TRUTH? I'VE NEVER LIED TO ANY OF YOU.
EVER HEARD OF LIES OF OMISSION, SWAN?
YES.
THAT'S WHAT ALL THE IGNORANT PEOPLE CALL DISPLAYS OF THEIR IGNORANCE.
TONY.
IT'S TIME. INCURSION'S TWENTY MINUTES OUT.
WE HAVE TO GO.
RESILIENT

I'LL BE BACK... AND THEN WE'LL GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT.

WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THAT WAS ABOUT?

A MAN COMING TO THE END OF HIMSELF.

INCURSION.

AND YOU'RE SURE OF WHAT YOU SAW?

YOU'VE WATCHED THE RECORDINGS FROM THE BRIDGE AS WELL...

WE'RE ALL SURE OF WHAT'S WAITING FOR US ON THAT OTHER WORLD...

"WE HAVE SEEN SO MUCH EVIL IN THE COLLAPSING OF WORLDS...BUT NOW WE WILL SEE SOMETHING TRULY WICKED.

"WHAT'S WORSE THAN FACING VILLAINS WITH THE FATE OF YOUR WORLD HANGING IN THE BALANCE?

"FACING HEROES."

“WE ARE ALL MONSTERS NOW”

INCURSION
EARTH-616 : EARTH-4,290,001.

ANYTHING?

THERE.
I DON'T THINK IT'S BLACK PRIESTS OR SIDERA MARIS...I CAN'T MAKE OUT IF--
I SEE IT, BOUNDLESS...
AND IT'S NEITHER. MAYBE THERE'S A CHANCE FOR PEACE HERE...
RIDER, CAN YOU?
ON IT. THEY'RE HUMAN...OR MOSTLY HUMAN. IT'S AN EARTH, SO NO SURPRISE THERE.
BUT CERTAINLY NOT ANY IDENTIFIABLE AS FRIEND OR FOE.
DIVINATION?
THE NORN ISN'T IN ANY SHAPE TO--
NO. A LITTLE PREVENTION MIGHT SAVE US FROM A TERMINAL EVENT...
"WE HAVE TO KNOW, DOCTOR... ARE THEY GOOD OR EVIL?
"ARE THEY MEN...
"OR ARE THEY *MONSTERS?*"

THEN.

WHAT'S THIS, DOCTOR BANNER?

AN IDEA I GOT FROM THE BRAIN-DAMAGED HULK FROM ANOTHER EARTH...

HIS AVENGERS TEAMMATES COULD CONTROL HIM BY STIMULATING THE EMOTIONAL CENTERS OF HIS BRAIN. THEY BASICALLY CREATED A HULK OVERRIDE SYSTEM--CONTROLLING WHEN HE COULD BECOME THE HULK AND WHEN HE REMAINED BANNER.

A SLIGHT PINCH.

PFPTT!

OW.

ANYWAY... THIS IS MY VERSION OF THAT.

IT'S A LIMITED WORK-AROUND THAT I'LL USE SPARINGLY...

BUT IT GIVES ME SOME MANNER OF CONTROL OVER WHEN I CHANGE--AND, FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM, IT ALLOWS ME TO *THROTTLE BACK* WHILE GREEN WITH RAGE.

WELL, PARDON ME FOR STATING THE OBVIOUS, BRUCE... BUT WHY THE LIMITATION?

IF IT WORKS, IT WORKS... NO?

WELL...IT WORKS BY FIRING ELECTRICITY INTO SOME RATHER DELICATE AREAS OF MY BRAIN, DR. McCOY. SO...

YOU'D RATHER NOT LOBOTOMIZE YOURSELF.

ESPECIALLY SINCE WE'RE HERE FIRST AND FOREMOST FOR THAT VERY THING.

IF YOU SAY SO...

I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER HOW TRUE THAT REALLY IS.

I'M NEW HERE, HANK.

NEBULOUS HINTS AT SECRET MOTIVATIONS JUST LEAVE ME WONDERING WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

WITH THE TWO OF US, THERE'S STILL ENOUGH BRAIN ACTIVITY IN OUR SECRET ORGANIZATION TO POWER A SMALL CITY.

ALL THESE QUESTIONS WE BRILLIANT MEN ARE ASKING...

WHAT IF THEY'RE NOT THE *RIGHT* QUESTIONS AT ALL?

GO ON...I'M LISTENING.

WHAT IF--IN THE END--THIS ISN'T AN EXERCISE IN SURVIVAL, BRUCE, BUT A QUESTION OF HUMANITY?

YOU TELL ME...

WHO HERE KNOWS BETTER THAN YOU AND I...*THE REALITY* OF THAT STRUGGLE...

AND HOW EASILY THE HUMAN GIVES WAY TO SOMETHING *LESS MORAL* AND *MORE PRIMAL*.

NOW.

LIVING IN A VIOLENT WORLD MAKES ONE QUESTION THE GOODNESS OF MAN. YET YOU CAME HERE, WITH YOUR ARMS WIDE OPEN...

TALKING *PEACE* WHILE THE SKY BLEEDS RED.

SEE? THERE *IS* HOPE.

STILL...

A PEACEFUL ARRIVAL UNDER A WHITE FLAG AND PASSING SOME MAGICAL RORSCHACH TEST ISN'T REALLY A GUARANTEE OF ANYTHING, IS IT?

HOW *CAN* WE REALLY TRUST YOU?

MORE IMPORTANTLY... HOW DO *YOU* KNOW TO TRUST *US?*

OH, WE'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU.

WHAT?

WE'VE BEEN *WATCHING* YOU.

SAYING IT AGAIN DOESN'T MAKE IT BETTER.

CREEP.

NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... WE CONSTRUCTED A MACHINE THAT ENABLED US TO OBSERVE YOUR EARTH.

WE USED THIS MACHINE TO STUDY MULTIPLE EARTHS UNDERGOING INCURSIONS... SO WE USED IT TO STUDY YOU.

I THINK THEY GET IT, HENRY.

YOU HAVE SEEN THE END OF WORLDS?

TOO MANY TIMES.

AND YOU?

THREE.

THREE TIMES.

INTERESTING. WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO OBSERVE AND RECORD *TWO*.

YES. WHILE YOUR MAPMAKER SOLUTION WAS LESS THAN ELEGANT, THE OTHER INSTANCE WE OBSERVED WAS FASCINATING...

IN FACT, ALL OUR MODELS SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT WHAT YOU DID *WASN'T POSSIBLE*.

HOW DID YOU MOVE YOUR EARTH-- AND BY EXTENSION YOUR UNIVERSE-- OUT OF PHASE?

I USED A *WISHING BOX.*

WHAT IS--

WHOOMP!

IT'S AN ITEM OF GREAT POWER, A CUBE MADE UP OF SIX PLANES OF FOREVER GLASS.

BUT THAT IS LOST TO US NOW, AS THE BOX WAS DESTROYED IN THE PROCESS.

OH. I SEE.

YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU HAVE SEEN A WISHING BOX BEFORE?

A DIFFERENT MANIFESTATION OF IT. WE CALLED OURS A *GAUNTLET.* IT HAD INFINITY GEMS, NOT PLANES OF... FOREVER GLASS.

I SUPPOSE THERE'S SOME COMFORT IN KNOWING THAT WAS NEVER A LONG-TERM SOLUTION.

WHAT WAS THE THIRD?

WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT.

SO, THEORETICS ASIDE...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS INCURSION?

WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE?

WE HAVE NO PLANS--WHAT PLANS COULD ANYONE HAVE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

DO YOU HAVE PLANS?

YOU KNOW WHAT...WHY DON'T WE TALK ABOUT OPTIONS INSTEAD OF WORSE-CASE SCENARIOS?

SEE IF WE CAN'T COME UP WITH SOMETHING IN THE TIME WE HAVE LEFT.

YOU DO HAVE A PLAN. YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO TELL US.

YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING...

YES. WE HAVE A PLAN.

IT'S AN ANTIMATTER DEVICE THAT WILL DESTROY A PLANET. WE HAVE A *BOMB.*

WE BUILT A BOMB THAT WILL DESTROY A WORLD.

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE?

I TOLD YOU ALREADY...

WE HAVE *HOPE.*

WELL...

I *HOPE* YOU CAN COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER.

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS. EARTH-616.

"EVERYONE AROUND HERE IS CONCERNED ABOUT RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

"I SAY THE TICKING CLOCK MAKES US LESS WASTEFUL. I SAY THE CLOCK MAKES US BOLD."

I SAY IT'S TIME TO GET A LITTLE CRAZY.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, LITTLE BIRD?

I THINK, FOR A MAN OF ACTION, YOU TALK TOO MUCH, MAXIMUS.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE. SO... FORWARD WITH THE EXPERIMENT.

THEY NEVER LET ME PLAY WITH THE GOOD TOYS...SO I HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL ALL THE COWBOYS ARE AWAY AT THE ROW-DEE-OH.

MICROSCOPIC DRILL-- WE DON'T WANT ANY PRYING EYES TO SEE THE HOLE...

BUT I'M DYING TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LITTLE AIR REACHES THOSE REGROWING BONES OF *CORVUS GLAIVE*.

OH MY... HE DIDN'T DISAPPOINT, DID HE?

THEN.

WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THAT WAS ABOUT?

A MAN COMING TO THE END OF HIMSELF.

YOU *DO* KNOW THAT THERE'S NOTHING ABNORMAL ABOUT HOW HUMAN BEINGS RESPOND TO TRAUMA, DON'T YOU, SWAN?

THIS JUDGING PEOPLE FOR THEIR WEAKNESSES IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY-- IT'S COUNTER TO EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT HOW PEOPLE DEAL WITH PAIN.

ARE YOU SAYING THAT ANTHONY IS IN PAIN?

WE ALL ARE, INCLUDING YOU. YOU'VE JUST BEEN HURTING A LOT LONGER...AND IT'S MADE YOU MUCH, MUCH HARDER.

I'VE SAID IT BEFORE, AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN...I CAN HELP YOU.

YOU KNOW I HAVE KNOWN OTHER YOUS...AND I HAVE HEARD THEM SAY SIMILAR THINGS...

AND?

I'VE LEARNED THIS IS HOW THE GREAT REED RICHARDS MANAGES *HIS PAIN*.

APPEALING TO THE HEART WHEN HIS INTELLECT HAS FAILED.

THIS.

THIS IS WHEN YOU NO LONGER INTEREST ME, REED...

BECAUSE YOU BECOME USELESS.

WAIT UP, TONY.

NOT NOW, REED.

HEY!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

WHAT HAPPENED TO *YOUR FACE?*

AND WHAT WAS THAT BACK THERE WITH THE ULTIMATUM AND THE COERCION ROUTINE? I'VE NEVER SEEN...WHAT I MEAN IS, THAT'S NOT HOW WE--

WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

WE'VE BEEN RUNNING OUT OF TIME SINCE THIS STARTED. I'M JUST AS TIRED AS YOU ARE, BUT--

CAP KNOWS.

HE REMEMBERED.

I SEE. AND THEN HE...

WAIT. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

YES.

WHAT *ABOUT* THE OTHERS?

ILIENT

THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW.

AND GOING FORWARD...MY GOD, THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE *MOST POWERFUL AVENGERS TEAM EVER ASSEMBLED* IS GETTING READY TO COME CRASHING DOWN ON US.

SO THAT'S WHY, IN THERE, YOU WERE THREATENING TO DO WHAT YOU--

YEAH.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANY MORE... DO YOU?

BEYOND OUR CONTINGENCIES--THE NIGHTMARE SCENARIOS THAT WE'RE MOVING TOWARDS? NO.

THE WORST PART IS THEY'LL BE RIGHTEOUS IN COMING AFTER US. WE'VE DONE TERRIBLE THINGS, ANTHONY.

AND THE WORST OF IT ALL...

WE *CAN'T STOP*, CAN WE?

NOW.

SO WHAT WAS YOUR PLAN?

COME HERE? KILL US? BLOW UP OUR WORLD?

SOME OTHER SEDUCTIVE DANCE MEANT TO CATCH US UNAWARES?

WAYNE, I'M SURE THAT--

NO. WE NEED TO KNOW THIS. NOW.

ARE YOU HERE TO KILL OUR WORLD?

OF COURSE NOT.

OF COURSE NOT.

BECAUSE WE WANT TO BELIEVE WE'RE NOT ALL CAPABLE OF THE UNTHINKABLE.

NAMOR--DON'T SAY ANOTHER WORD.

LISTEN. WE HAVE TIME.

NOT MUCH, BUT **SOME**...WHAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON IS FIGURING OUT A WAY TO SAVE THE MOST PEOPLE.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE TRIAGE.

IT IS!

HONESTLY, WHAT ELSE *COULD* IT BE?

TWO UNIVERSES COLLIDING AT THE TOUCH POINT OF EARTHS--THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THEM IS FOR ONE OF THOSE EARTHS TO BE DESTROYED...SAVING BOTH UNIVERSES.

AND A SINGLE EARTH.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS CHOOSING WHICH ONE. IT WOULD BE WRONG--IT WOULD BE *IMMORAL*--NOT TO MAKE A CHOICE.

IF YOU'RE ATTEMPTING TO CONSTRUCT AN ARGUMENT THAT MAKES YOU THE MOST MORAL MASS-MURDERER IN THE LONG HISTORY OF MASS-MURDERERS...CONGRATULATIONS. YOU'VE SUCCEEDED.

ARE YOU PROUD OF YOURSELF?

NORN...AN ASSESSMENT, PLEASE.

THERE ARE NO LIES HERE. ONLY REGRET.

THERE IS A SHADE OVER THESE MEN'S SOULS...BUT THAT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE. HOWEVER, NOW THEY GRAVITATE TO THE NIGHT.

GREAT BUILDERS OF WEAPONS. MACHINES OF DESTRUCTION. WORDS OF POWER. SOUNDS OF FURY.

A STORM TO CONSUME US ALL...
SO YOU'RE PROPOSING WHAT, EXACTLY?
THAT WE WORK TOGETHER TO FIND SOME SOLUTION OVER THE NEXT HOUR, AND IF WE DO NOT FIND ONE, WE MOVE ON TO WORST-CASE SCENARIOS.
LET'S DO THAT.
NO. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR... WORST-CASE SCENARIOS.
LET'S ASSUME WE FAIL. TELL ME WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
SOMETHING TERRIBLE.
BE MORE SPECIFIC.
IN ORDER TO SAVE BOTH UNIVERSES... AN EARTH HAS TO DIE. YOU KNOW THIS.
I DO... BUT WHICH EARTH?
I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK YOU DO...BUT EVEN IF YOU DON'T...
GIVE ME YOUR BEST GUESS.
DO YOU HAVE THE POWER TO DESTROY A PLANET?
NO. BUT YOU DO.
YES. WE DO.
BUT WE SHOULD BE--
NO! BECAUSE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT...THERE'S ONLY ONE OF TWO OPTIONS: YOU KILL OUR EARTH...OR YOU KILL YOUR OWN.
SO YOU LISTEN TO ME! YOU'RE NOT KILLING OUR WORLD, NOT WHILE I STILL BREATHE...
NOT WHILE ANY OF US DO!

THUNK!

I'M TIRED OF WAITING FOR THE INEVITABLE.

IF I MUST BECOME THIS THING, THEN LET IT BE AT A TIME OF MY OWN CHOOSING.

WAYNE! WAYNE! ARE YOU...

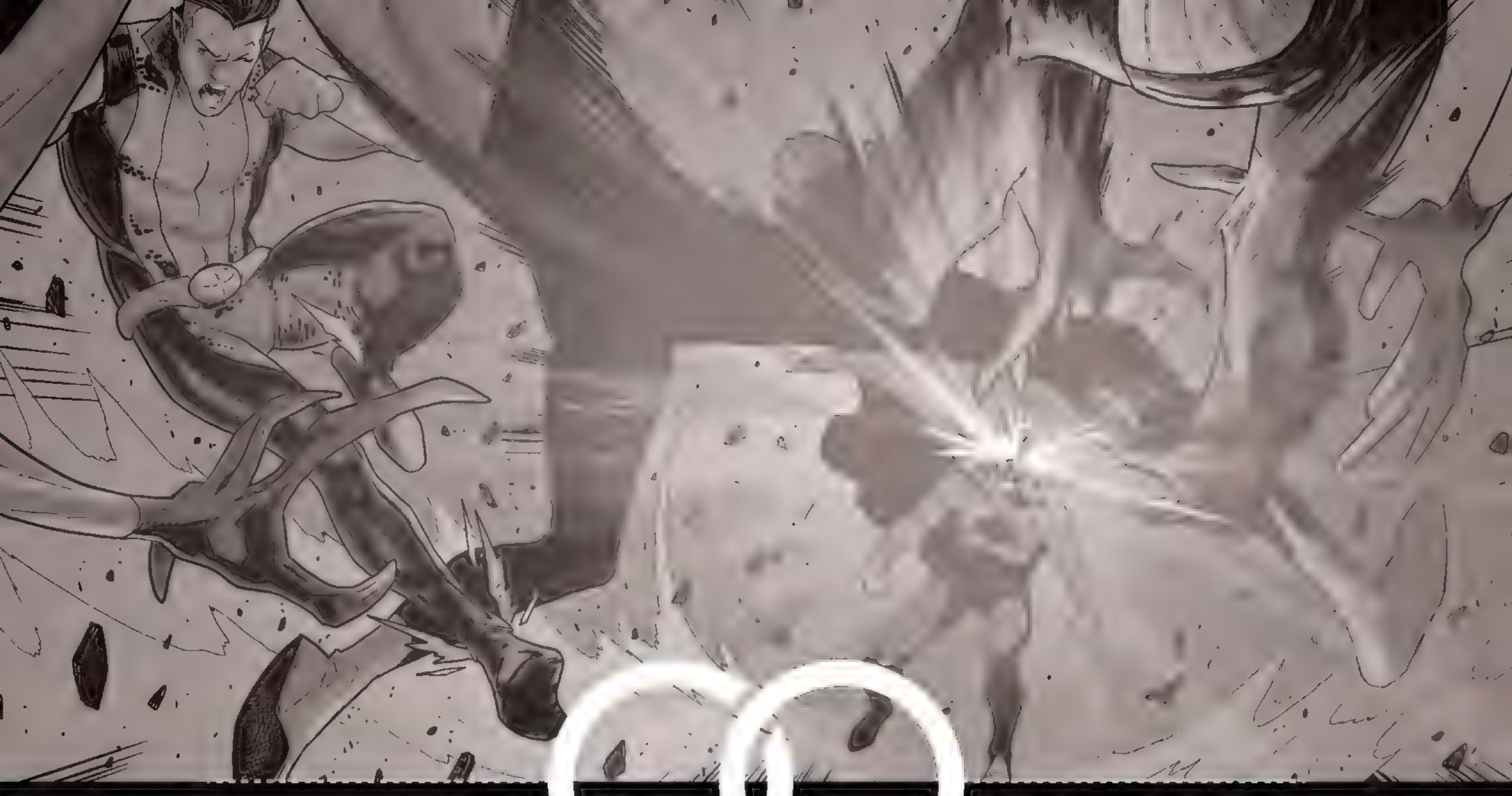
STILL BREATHING. BUT YOU UNDERSTAND NOW, RIGHT?

THIS CAN'T END ANY OTHER WAY.

YES.

OH, GOD...

THIS IS IT.



“BLU’DAKORR”

ARE YOU SELLING YOUR SOUL, STEPHEN?

I AM.

THEN.

HOW MUCH?

HOW MUCH OF YOUR SOUL DO YOU SELL THIS DAY?

ALL OF IT.

ALL. EVERYTHING.

THE GODHEAD.

YOURS...

IF YOU COULD PAY.

NO...

WHY? WHY DID YOU STOP?
I HELD IT IN MY HANDS...THE POWER TO CREATE AND DESTROY WORLDS...
WHY?
WE HAD A DEAL.
DEALS ARE SEALED WITH TRUST. A SURETY THAT WITHSTANDS THE TRANSACTION.
WHAT DO YOU CALL A DEAL WHERE ONE SIDE CANNOT MEET THE OBLIGATIONS?
NO DEAL AT ALL.
STEPHEN STRANGE...YOU ARE A DEBTOR. INSOLVENT.
A BANKRUPT LIAR.
HOW COULD YOU OFFER YOUR SOUL AS PAYMENT, SORCERER...
WHEN YOU LACK THE FULL MEASURE OF ONE?

NOW.

WE'RE COMMITTED NOW...HERE THEY COME!

STEPHEN!

WHAT'S THE STATUS OF HANK AND REED?

THEY'RE OUT...

BUT *I SEE* NO INTERNAL BLEEDING. AND NO BROKEN BONES OR HEAD TRAUMA.

THEY'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS--

AARGGGHHHH!

THIS ONE... HAS POWER BUT DOES NOT GUARD HIS MIND. WITHIN I SEE A POISONED HEART. I SEE TWISTED THOUGHTS.

I SEE PLANS. DARK PLANS.

I SEE THEIR WEAPON.

WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE BOMB, NORN...

IT DOESN'T DO US ANY GOOD IF WE DON'T KNOW THE DAMN THING'S *LOCATION.*

FIND IT!

FARCASTING THE SPHERE YIELDS NO RESONANCE.

HOW DO YOU HIDE SOMETHING THAT IS *SOMETHING* AND NOT *NOTHING?*

UNLESS... YES...

THE *SECOND* SPHERE.

"THEY LEFT THE BOMB ON *THEIR* WORLD--AT THEIR INCURSION POINT."

FOR QUICK RETRIEVAL, NO DOUBT.

SPECTRUM! GO! NOW!

"YOU HAVE TO DESTROY THE BOMB!"

I'M ON IT...

BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE, I SEE.

HURK!

YES. THE PAIN IS UNFORTUNATE... BUT THAT'S WHAT IT'S COME TO, HASN'T IT?

YOU FIGHT AND CLAW AND BITE FOR ANOTHER BREATH, BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD. NOT AGAINST *ME*.

I'VE WATCHED YOU...HOW YOU FIGHT...HOW YOU THINK...

WHILE *YOU* HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT YOU'RE FACING.

YOU'RE WRONG. I MAY NOT KNOW YOU...I MAY HAVE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE...

BUT I'VE SEEN *YOUR KIND*: FLAWED MEN FEIGNING NOBILITY.

ANY PAIN I FEEL IS OUT OF PITY...

I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.

AND THE WRETCHED END YOU MUST HAVE WAITING FOR YOU.

YOU FIGHT WELL... POSSIBLY BETTER THAN I...

BUT IT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH FOR EITHER OF US. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.

OF ALL THE *GREAT SOCIETY* GATHERED HERE TODAY...

I AM THE LAST ONE YOU WANT TO WASTE PLATITUDES ON--WE BOTH KNOW HOW THIS ENDS.

SO WHY LIE?

ZZZTOOM

VERY WELL...

NO LIES.

VMMMM

VMMMM

THERE WILL BE DEATH HERE TODAY.

BA-BOOOOOM!

YUH...YES, THERE WILL BE...

BUT I DO NOT THINK *YOU OR I* STAND MUCH CHANCE OF SURVIVING.

HOW COULD ANYONE SURVIVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

THEN PERHAPS YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF...

IF IT'S THE END, AND THE END IS ASSURED...

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE GO?

IT DOES TO ME.

KSSSH

AND I AS WELL.

TO THE END, THEN... THE VERY EN--

OOOFFF!

RAARRRRRR!

LOOK AT YOU...POWERFUL... RECKLESS AND DANGEROUS.

THE PERFECT EMBODIMENT OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TRAIT YOU "HEROES" SHARE.

YOU'RE ALL *OUT OF CONTROL*...LIKE SOME CORRUPTED FORCE OF NATURE.

HULK NOT OUT OF CONTROL!

HULK NOT NATURE!

HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!

TWUMMMP!

TWU--

MAYBE IN *YOUR* UNIVERSE, MONSTER...

RRR?

BUT NOT IN THIS ONE.

BLACK PANTHER: ENGAGED (STALEMATE)
NAMOR: ENGAGED (STALEMATE)
MISTER FANTASTIC: INACTIVE (UNCONSCIOUS)
BEAST: INACTIVE (UNCONSCIOUS)
HULK: INACTIVE (DEFEATED)
BLACK BOLT: DISENGAGED (OFFWORLD)
DOCTOR STRANGE: ENGAGED (UNKNOWN)

OH, GOD...

IRON MAN STATUS: ENGAGED
TARGET: BOUNDLESS.
(TRACKING SYSTEM / TARGETING OFFLINE)
(SYSTEM FAILURE IMMINENT)

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP, BOUNDLESS?

WOOSH

NOPE. I'M FINE.

MISTER *SMART PERSON* HERE THINKS HE'S *SO VERY SMART* THAT HE CAN OUTTHINK EVERYTHING.

BUT YOU CAN'T PROCESS AND RESPOND TO INFORMATION AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, CAN YOU?

OF COURSE NOT.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GOOD YOUR HARDWARE IS, YOUR BRAIN JUST DOESN'T WORK THAT FAST, TIN MAN.

YOU SHOULD REALLY THINK ABOUT AN UPGRADE.

BECOME A BETTER MAN. BE SOMEONE ELSE.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, ISN'T IT? YOU'RE OUT OF TIME.

WE ALL ARE.

YOU DO NOT NEED AN ALL-SEEING EYE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE TODAY, SORCERER...

VIRTUE CANNOT BE BARTERED. YES, WE MAY DO EVIL THINGS FOR A GREATER GOOD...

THAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE PRICE...

BUT THE *UNTHINKABLE?*

THE VERY *IDEA* IS UNSPEAKABLE AND MUST NOT BE UTTERED.

SO I SAY NOW TO YOU...*OTHER THINGS.*

DO YOU KNOW THE WORDS OF THE ***BLACK PRIESTS***, SORCERER SUPREME?

HAVE YOU HEARD THEM?

K'OOTH UL D'AYN.

YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL.

THEN.

I AM DAMNED...AND WORSE THAN THAT, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY I HAVE BECOME *LOST*.

TELL ME, WONG...IF I AM LOST, AND LACKING BOTH TIME AND MEANS... THEN WHAT HOPE DO I HAVE FOR REDEMPTION?

WE DO WORKS FOR MANY REASONS, MASTER.

I THINK, FOR A SEASON, YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO WALK THIS WORLD AND OTHERS WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED...

AND NOW YOU ASK ME--HOW CAN I CONTINUE IF I HAVE BECOME BLIND?

OPEN YOUR EYES, MY FRIEND. SEE THE THINGS THAT I KNOW ARE REAL...AND BELIEVE TO BE TRUE.

AND WHAT ARE THOSE?

YOU, STEPHEN.

SOMEWHERE IN THERE...YOU ARE STILL A GOOD MAN.

THEN LET THAT SLIVER OF WHAT I WAS BE ENOUGH...

AS ALL I SEE BEFORE ME NOW IS *THE ABYSS.*

AND WHAT LIVES THERE... WHICH WILL LIVE THROUGH ME.

K'OOTH LIL D'AYN.

YOOL--

--D'AYN HAT WHUURL.

DO YOU KNOW THESE WORDS, CHARLATAN?

OF COURSE YOU DON'T.

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE *THE GIFT*, DO YOU?

I WOULD WAGER YOU'VE SPENT MOST OF YOUR LIFE ACQUIRING YOUR ITEMS OF POWER. AT BEST, YOU'RE A CURATOR...

NO!

BUT I THINK WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE JUST A THIEF.

UNF!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE *REAL* POWER, CHILD?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT THE *ART* REALLY COSTS?

K'OOTH UL D'AYN...

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL."

AAIIEEE!

RESILIENT

AARGHH!

ZORAN! LOOK OUT!

WHAT IS THIS?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, SORCERER?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

GIVEN ALL I HAD LEFT-- I HAVE SACRIFICED WHAT LITTLE REMAINED...

ALL TO DESTROY YOUR WORLD...

AND SAVE MINE.

“THE BOMB”

THEN.
THE NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

T'CHALLA...

YES, FATHER?

WHY DOES THE ATLANTEAN STILL BREATHE?

WHY HAVEN'T YOU KILLED HIM YET?

WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE WHAT YOU PROMISED?

WHAT I *PROMISED?*

I HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE EXPECTED OF ME--SACRIFICED EVERYTHING FOR MY PEOPLE... EVERYTHING FOR MY NATION.

MY OWN DESIRES, MY OWN MARRIAGE...I HAVE COMMITTED MURDER MANY, MANY TIMES.

I HAVE DONE ALL OF THIS FOR WAKANDA--WITH HEAD HELD HIGH, AND NO REGARD FOR SELF...

HOW *DARE* YOU DOUBT ME, FATHER.

MY SON...

HERE IN THE SHADOWLANDS--BEYOND ALL MORTAL CONCERNS AND CONSTRAINTS--I SEE ONLY TWO THINGS: WHAT IS DONE. WHAT IS NOT DONE.

SO AM I BLIND? IS THE ATLANTEAN A WELL-PRESERVED CORPSE YOU USE AS A MARIONETTE? OR DOES HE YET LIVE...ARROGANT AND UNPUNISHED?

BLOOD DEMANDS BLOOD, T'CHALLA--DO YOUR DUTY.

I AM TRYING TO SAVE *OUR PEOPLE*, FATHER--*THAT IS MY DUTY!*

AND WHILE I STILL LIVE, I WILL NOT LOOK AT THE WORLD AND SEE ALL PEOPLE AS YOU DO--EVENTUAL ASH AND DUST--BUT AS MEN AND WOMEN WHO STILL BREATHE, AND HAVE PURPOSE.

I BELIEVE NAMOR HAS A PURPOSE.

AND UNTIL THAT PURPOSE HAS BEEN FULFILLED... HE WILL HAVE MY MERCY.

MERCY? *MERCY?*

MY FOOLISH SON. FOR A KING... EVERY MOMENT OF MERCY IS A *TRAGEDY.*

NOW. INCURSION.
EARTH-616:EARTH-4,290,001.

MY GOD...

I THINK NOT. THIS HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH GOD...OR EVEN GODS.

WE'RE IN A MUCH DARKER PLACE, I'M AFRAID.

I DIDN'T KNOW STRANGE WAS *CAPABLE* OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

"OH, STEPHEN... WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?"

K'OOTH UL D'AYN.

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL."

AAARRGGHHHH!

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL.

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL!"

WAYNE!

ACK!

YOU...YOU WERE RIGHT, ZORAN. I WAS WRONG.

IF IT ALL ENDS THIS BADLY, I SHOULD HAVE LIVED A BETT--

AARGGHH!

NO... WAYNE... NO...

NOOO!

HURK!

ARRGGHH—

HHHHHHHH

HHHHH

DO WE HAVE ANY IDEA IF WHAT HE IS DOING IS GOING TO SAVE EARTH...

OR ANYTHING AT ALL?

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE COULD. THAT MONSTER IS...

NO.

IT'S NOT THE *MONSTER* THAT SHOULD CONCERN YOU...

IT'S *STEPHEN.*

"WE HAVE TO STOP HIM."

HE'S COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL.

STARK, CAN YOU GET THAT REPULSOR ONLINE? BECAUSE IF I CAN REVERSE THE--

YEAH. A SHORT-FREQUENCY PULSE SHOULD DO IT.

MAYBE.

"WHAT OTHER OPTION DO WE HAVE?"

AAAA.

NONE. OKAY...YOU'RE GOOD TO GO. POWER STEADY?

YEAH.

THEN...

FIRE!

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.

"I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT...

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS?"

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME?

I SAY PROBLEM LIKE IT'S ONE THING--SINGULAR--BUT IT'S ACTUALLY A COMBINATION OF THINGS. WHICH I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BOTHER POINTING OUT, AS MOST PROBLEMS ARE ACTUALLY "MULTIPLE PROBLEMS"...

A SERIES OF COMPLICATIONS THAT EVENTUALLY REACH A CRITICAL, NONDISSIPATING STATE THAT INEVITABLY LEADS TO--

IT REALLY IS *STUNNING* HOW MUCH YOU LOVE TO HEAR YOURSELF TALK, MAXIMUS.

YOU WANT ME TO GET TO THE POINT.

I CAN DO THAT.

"YOUR PROBLEM IS ONE OF *EXCLUSION*, AND IT'S ALSO ONE OF *EXPERIENCE*...

"SEE, I WENT BACK AND LOOKED AT THE LOGS OF YOUR--AND OTHER SWANS'--ADVENTURES THROUGH SPACE AND TIME, AND SOMETHING JUMPED OUT AT ME...YOU BIRDS HAVE A PATTERN.

"YOU RECRUIT A CERTAIN TYPE OF PERSON TO HELP YOU DO WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.

"YOU RECRUIT *HEROES*.

"PROBABLY SOMETHING TO DO WITH EXPLOITABLE IDEALISM AND THE FREQUENTLY TERMINAL AFFLICTION CALLED ALTRUISM.

"BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU DID HERE ON *OUR* EARTH...SEE, THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED...BUT YOU GOT MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR.

"YOU'RE USED TO DEALING WITH HEROES...BUT WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH IS *KINGS*.

"AND THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM HERE.

"YOU CAN'T THINK OF THEM AS NORMAL MEN. YOU CAN'T EVEN THINK OF THEM AS BEHAVING HUMAN--THAT'S THINKING TOO SMALL...

"THEY ARE LARGER THAN THAT, *BIGGER* THAN THAT...THEY EXIST ABOVE OTHER MEN BECAUSE THEY WERE BORN THAT WAY.

"AUTHORITY BEGAN AT THE CRADLE, YOU SEE.

"THEIR VERY IDEA OF MORALITY IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU ARE USED TO.

"THE PEOPLE--THEIR PEOPLE--EXPECT THEM TO DO VIOLENCE TO ENSURE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

"AND LIKE GODS, THEY ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO COMMIT MURDER...SO THE PEOPLE CAN SLEEP AT NIGHT KNOWING THEY ARE PROTECTED.

"YOU'VE UNDERESTIMATED YOUR SITUATION, BLACK SWAN.

"YOU'VE UNDERESTIMATED WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH."

BUT THERE IS *SOME* GOOD NEWS.

AND WHAT IS THAT?

I COULD BE A KING.

"WAS IT DAMAGED BY WHATEVER THAT WAS THAT STRANGE CONJURED?"

NO. EVERYTHING LOOKS INTACT, INCLUDING THE SHIELDING MECHANISM.

DIAGNOSTICS ARE GREEN ACROSS THE BOARD...

THE BOMB IS BOTH STABLE AND FULLY OPERATIONAL.

ALL RIGHT THEN. THIS IS IT.

BE-BOOP!

IT DOESN'T HAVE...HAVE TO BE.

YOU... YOU DON'T HAVE TO *DO* THIS...

I WISH THAT WERE TRUE, BUT IT ISN'T, IS IT? IT DOES HAVE TO BE ***ONE WAY*** OR THE ***OTHER***.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE IGNORANT OF ALL THIS. I WISH I COULD GO BACK...

BUT WE CAN'T... SO HERE WE ARE.

YOU COULD COME WITH US.

I...I WOULD RATHER DIE. WITH...WITH MY FRIENDS...

WITH... WITH MY WORLD.

AND IN THAT, I SUSPECT WE ARE THE SAME.

I'M SORRY. I REALLY AM.

DON'T... DON'T DO IT.

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN.

EITHER WAY...YOU DESERVED BETTER.

"IT SHOULDN'T END THIS WAY FOR ANY OF US."

EARTH-616.
TEN MINUTES TO COLLISION.

TRIGGER ACTIVE.

ARE WE *REALLY* GOING TO DO THIS?

WE'RE OUT OF TIME, BRUCE... WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS...WE HAVE TO.

BUT...I...I DON'T THINK I CAN.

I KNOW IT'S A NECESSARY EVIL. I KNOW I WOULD BE SAVING HUNDREDS OF TRILLIONS OF LIVES AT THE COST OF MERE BILLIONS. I KNOW THERE IS NO REAL SHAME IN COMING TO THAT CONCLUSION--IN MAKING THAT CHOICE.

BUT EVEN WITH ALL THINGS HANGING IN THE BALANCE... THERE IS A LINE.

AND I *CAN'T* DO THIS.

WELL, DON'T LOOK AT ME...

I HELPED BUILD THE THING, I'M NOT USING IT EITHER.

BRUCE?

HENRY?

NO.

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

ASK NO QUARTER OF ME, RICHARDS. ASK NOTHING, AS I ALREADY GAVE ALL THAT I HAD.

AND WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MY GIFT? YOU THREW IT AWAY WITH NO ACCOUNTING FOR WHAT I PAID.

DO NOT ASK ME WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WITH YOUR...MACHINE. YOU WOULD NOT LIKE MY ANSWER.

AND YOU, BLACK BOLT? WOULD YO--

GIVE THE TRIGGER TO ME, REED.

I WILL DO IT.

T'CHALLA, I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO--

WE'RE OUT OF TIME. AND THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT...

THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO SAY.

THEN WHY HESITATE...IS THIS YET MORE OF YOUR MERCY, T'CHALLA?

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, YOU TOLD ME TO ALWAYS CONSIDER MY ACTIONS, FATHER.

THIS... DEMANDS CONSIDERATION.

DOES IT?

THIS ACTION IS NOT ABOUT YOU, OR ME, OR EVEN OUR PEOPLE--WHO ALL BLACK PANTHERS HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT...

IT IS THE ENTIRE LINE. ALL THAT WE WILL BE!

THERE *MUST* BE A FUTURE FOR WAKANDA-- AS IT REPRESENTS THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANITY. THE GOLDEN CITY IS SET ABOVE ALL OTHERS... NOT THROUGH HUBRIS, BUT NECESSITY. A SIGNPOST POINTING THE WAY TO THE FUTURE... AND IT MUST SURVIVE.

DO YOUR DUTY AS A BLACK PANTHER...

AND REWARD OUR FAITH IN YOU, MY SON.

YES...OF COURSE.

YES.

THEN DO IT, BOY. YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

DO IT!

I KNOW I SHOULD...

I KNOW I MUST...BUT THE HORROR OF IT--THE INHUMANITY. MURDERING ALL THOSE PEOPLE. KILLING A WORLD.

IT'S...IT'S WRONG.

OF COURSE IT'S WRONG...

BUT YOU DO IT ANYWAY-- DUTY COMES WITH THE CROWN.

SHOULDN'T SUCH DUTY BE BENEATH US?

THE VERY NATURE OF IT... THE IGNOBILITY OF IT.

NOBILITY?

NONE OF THIS IS *NOBLE*... IT IS *WHAT'S EXPECTED.*

DO IT. NOW.

I CAN'T.

I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING... FOR YOU, FATHER...FOR MY PEOPLE. BUT I CAN'T DO THIS.

WE WERE CURSED WHEN WE MADE THIS MACHINE...

WE WERE DAMNED THE VERY DAY WE THOUGHT IT WAS FOR MEN TO DECIDE THINGS SUCH AS THIS.

DAMNED, T'CHALLA?

PERHAPS THAT WOULD BE FITTING...

BUT YOU STILL HAVE TIME.

IT...IS WRONG...

AND I CANNOT DO IT, FATHER!

I CANNOT.

NO. YOU CHOOSE NOT TO-- IT IS *YOUR CHOICE.*

SO HERE IS MINE: THERE IS AN ETERNITY... AND IN IT, YOU ARE DEAD TO ME, AND TO US ALL.

YOU HAVE NO PEOPLE.

YOU ARE NO BLACK PANTHER.

YOU ARE NO LONGER MY SON.

I'M SORRY...I'M SORRY...

IT'S OKAY, T'CHALLA.

IT'S OKAY. I UNDERSTAND...

REED, I... I TRIED, BUT I...

COULDN'T DO IT, JUST LIKE ALL THE REST OF US. MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY TO SEE THIS...

WHEN WE GOT TO THE END OURSELVES, WE FOUND OUT THAT THERE WERE THINGS WE WOULD NOT DO...

AND YOU KNOW...I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THAT. YOU SHOULDN'T BE EITHER...

IT MATTERS.

"IT MATTERS."

THE WAY YOU PEOPLE TALK ABOUT YOUR LIVES-- LIKE THEY MEAN SOMETHING...

"IT MATTERS."

I AM THE GREATEST MAN I KNOW...BUT COMPARED TO THIS, I'M NOTHING.

JUST AS *YOU*...ARE NOTHING.

AM I THE ONLY MAN HERE WITH THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS...OR AM I THE ONLY ONE WITH CONVICTION AT ALL?

NAMOR... DON'T...

IT'S NOT WORTH IT.

THESE LINES YOU WON'T CROSS... THESE THINGS YOU WON'T DO...

THEY *SHAME* YOU.

HOW DARE ANY OF YOU PUT YOURSELF--YOUR DAMNED MORALS--ABOVE THE LIVES OF EVERY LIVING THING?

THE TRUTH IS, YOU PEOPLE AREN'T WORTH THAT...AND NEITHER AM I. OUR LIVES ARE A PITTANCE.

A PETTY, SMALL NOTHING...

NAMOR!

NOOOO!

OF COURSE *THIS* IS WORTH IT.

NOW WATCH...AS I DO WHAT YOU COULD NOT.

“WE ARE NOT BROTHERS”

EARTH-4,290,001.

EARTH-616.
INCURSION ZONE.

SUCH A FRAGILE THING...

SIX POUNDS OF PRESSURE WAS ALL IT TOOK TO ACTIVATE A SWITCH, WHICH SENT AN ELECTRIC CURRENT TO A TRANSPONDER THAT THEN SENT A SIGNAL.

I WONDER... HOW IS IT THAT A SIMPLE, INANIMATE OBJECT CAN HAVE SUCH POWER OVER AN ENTIRE TAPESTRY OF LIVES?

AND THEN I REMEMBER...

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS MADE TO DO.

WE MADE IT TO ERASE ALL OUR LEGACIES, AND RECAST US AS SOMETHING ELSE.

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MAKES US, DON'T YOU?

FALLEN AT BEST.

AND AT WORST...

MONSTERS, NAMOR? HAVEN'T WE SECRETLY *ALWAYS* BEEN?

MEN LORDING OVER THE LIVES OF THEIR LESSERS? I WONDER NOW...

I THINK THEY WERE.

I'M NOT A VICTIM. I'M NOT A PAWN. I CHOSE THIS.

IF THE ROAD I HAVE TRAVELED ALWAYS LED ME HERE, WERE THE CHOICES ALONG THE WAY STILL ALL MINE?

FOR THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN *THE DARK ARTS.*

STRANGE ISN'T WRONG. WHAT WE DID WAS WITH OPEN EYES...

BUT WE MADE OUR CHOICE-- I MADE *MY CHOICE*...AND THEN *YOU* TOOK IT FROM ME.

I DIDN'T DO THIS. *YOU DID.*

BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T.

IS THAT IT?

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE?

AAARRGHHHH!

MY GOD... THEY'RE GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER.

UHF!

I THOUGHT WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING, T'CHALLA...

WHAK!

NAMOR! STOP THIS!

BEFORE IT GOES TOO FAR!

TOO FAR, REED?

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING NOW?

WAKE UP. ALL OF YOU. WE HAVE BEEN PROLONGING THIS FOR MONTHS...EACH OF US KNOWING HOW IT ENDS. EACH OF US EMBRACING--NOT REJECTING--IT.

THIS IS WHO WE ARE.

I DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT. I BELIEVED WE WOULD FIND A WAY OUT.

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD END LIKE THIS.

THEN YOU ARE A FOOL, ANTHONY.

BUT HOMO SAPIENS AS A NATURAL BORN KILLER? I LIKE TO THINK I HAD EVOLVED INTO SOMETHING MORE...

AND NOT SIMPLY SOMETHING MORE PROFICIENT.

IT DOESN'T MATTER *WHAT* WE ARE NOW, HENRY... ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT WE ARE *RIGHT*.

THIS WAS... *OUR ONLY CHOICE*...

AND IN ALL YOUR WEAKNESS, I MADE IT FOR YOU.

SO I AM OWED YOUR THANKS.

BUYHMFF!

ARGGGH!

YOU ARE OWED *NOTHING.* OTHER MEN DO NOT MAKE CHOICES FOR ME, NAMOR.

ESPECIALLY NOT YOU...

SHRING!

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE IS MERCY FROM ME...

AND NOW I'M ALL OUT.

ZZZARRHHHHH!

THIS IS HOW YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED, NAMOR...

YOU...ON YOUR KNEES... BEFORE ME.

SSSZZZZZLLL!

AARRGHHHH!

WHAAA

ENOUGH.

BOTH OF YOU, END THIS RIGHT NOW.

LOOK AROUND. A TERRIBLE THING HAS BEEN DONE...AND THE GREATER TRAGEDY IS THAT WE ARE NO CLOSER TO FINDING A WAY TO STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.

AND MAKE NO MISTAKE...IT *CANNOT* HAPPEN AGAIN. BUT WE HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD...

UNDERSTAND?

IT'S DONE-- *OVER* WE'VE CROSSED THE RUBICON AND THERE IS NO COMING BACK. BUT IF WE ARE LOST, THEN THE *ONE THING* WE CAN DO IS FIND A--

I DID IT.

IT WAS ME.

WE KNOW THAT.

NO... IT. WAS. *ME.*

WHAT ARE YOU...

WHEN THE ARMIES OF THANOS CAME, THEY FOUND A BROKEN ATLANTIS--THE WORK OF WAKANDA.

THE CULL OBSIDIAN--THANOS' BLACK ORDER--WANTED THE INFINITY GEMS, AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I DID TO SAVE WHAT WAS LEFT OF MY PEOPLE, T'CHALLA?

I TOLD A LIE.

I TOLD THANOS' GENERALS WHERE TO LOOK.

I TOLD THEM IF THEY SEARCHED IN THE MOST WRETCHED, GOD-FORSAKEN LAND ON THIS ENTIRE EARTH THEY WOULD FIND WHERE THE GEMS WERE HIDDEN.

WAKANDA.

YOU... EVEN *YOU* COULD NOT DO SUCH A THING.

OH, I DID.

AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN.

I DROWNED YOUR PEOPLE ONCE, AND THEN WHEN THEY DARED TO RAISE THEMSELVES UP, *I BURNED THEM DOWN AGAIN.*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I REGRET, *KING* OF THE *DEAD?*

THAT SO MANY WERE LEFT ALIVE.

BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW ONE THING: OF THOSE THAT REMAIN...

EVERY BREATH *THEY* TAKE...IS MERCY...FROM *ME.*

RARARRRRR!

LET GO OF ME!

LET ME GO!

GET OUT OF HERE, NAMOR.

WHEN DID YOU BECOME SUCH A *MONSTER?*

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, REED? WE ARE *ALL* MONSTERS NOW.

WE'VE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES TO REVEAL OURSELVES.

LEAVE. NOW!

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, NAMOR!

IF IT'S THE ONLY THING I DO BEFORE I DIE...

I WILL KILL YOU!

"EVERYTHING DIES.

"YOU.

"ME.

"EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET.

"OUR SUN. OUR GALAXY. AND, EVENTUALLY, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

"THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

"IT'S INEVITABLE...

"AND I ACCEPT IT."

SSSS

SSSS

07:55:24

“ALL THE ANGELS HAVE FALLEN”

MY GOD. IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN.

ANOTHER INCURSION...

WHAT NOW, T'CHALLA? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I CANNOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF ANOTHER WORLD, REED. I SIMPLY CANNOT.

CAN YOU, MY FRIEND?

07:55:24

NO.

"THEN THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO.

"WE DIE, REED...AND HOPEFULLY BETTER THAN WE LIVED."

NEW MEXICO.

BOB'S GAS N' GO

JUST THIS AND WHATEVER'S ON PUMP THREE.

GAS

NEED TO SEE SOME I.D.

SURE.

AND THANK YOU FOR THAT.

NEW MEXICO

Licence# 0795

Date of Birth

BANNER

ROBERT

123 MA

ALBUQ

/102

HEIGHT 5' 11"

EYES BRO

ENDORSEMEN

RESTRICTION

/01/2011

03/01/2015

Bruce Banner

US ARMY

RESTRICTED ACCESS

DANGER RADIATION

CLOSED

FFSST!

THIS IS IT, BIG GUY...

END OF THE WORLD.

THIS IS HOW I'M *FINALLY* GONNA GET YOU.

THREE HOURS UNTIL INCURSION.

THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING.

02:36:12

SO IF I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY...

...YOU'RE TELLING ME *YOU BLEW UP A WORLD?*

AHHH, ACTUALLY I MOST CERTAINLY DID ***NOT***, THOUGH THERE IS NO DENYING MY COMPLICITY IN THE ACT ITSELF...

AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, NO GETTING AROUND THE CONUNDRUM THAT IS THE DECISION TREE OF AN END-TIMES, NO-WIN SCENARIO.

I'M SURE YOU COMPREHEND THE COMPLEXITIES.

UH, NO. I'M NOT SURE I DO.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO TELL ME ALL THIS.

BECAUSE I'M CONFLICTED...

I HONESTLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO... EVEN IN THE FACE OF THE ***REALITY*** THAT THERE IS NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL I ***CAN*** DO.

I FIND MYSELF TRAPPED BETWEEN THE METAPHORICAL INTELLECTUAL ROCK AND MORAL HARD PLACE, YOUNG HENRY.

GIVEN THAT WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE...SHOULD I SHOULDER THIS BURDEN SILENTLY, LETTING THE LIVES OF EVERYONE I KNOW WINK OUT IN A STATE OF PEACEFUL IGNORANCE?

OR SHOULD I TELL THE WORLD--SCREAM IT FROM THE MOUNTAINS--AND INDUCE A GLOBAL PANIC THAT HAS NO HOPE OF A SOLUTION?

HENCE THE QUESTION: WHAT IS THE MORAL DECISION? WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

WHICH BRINGS US TO YOU...

WITH WHO ELSE COULD I TALK THIS THROUGH EXCEPT THE ONLY PERSON WHOSE OPINION I TRULY TRUST--***ME.***

SO...GIVEN THAT, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHAT DO I THINK?

WELL, IF I'M BEING HONEST... I'M HAVING A BIT OF A HARD TIME WRAPPING MY MIND AROUND THIS...SITUATION.

FRANKLY, I'M STRUGGLING WITH ANOTHER ASPECT OF THIS.

WHICH IS?

HOW, GIVEN ALL THIS... GIVEN YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN IT...WELL...

HOW IN THE HELL DID YOU THINK IT WAS FAIR TO BRING US INTO THE FUTURE AND MISS OUR ENTIRE LIVES IF ALL THAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN WAS WE DIE?!

YES. I CAN SEE HOW THAT MIGHT PREOCCUPY THE MIND.

I'M SORRY, HENRY...HOPE IS A BLIND FOOL.

MY ACTIONS WERE... REGRETTABLE.

CAN I ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION, DOCTOR MCCOY?

OF COURSE.

DO YOU REMEMBER EXACTLY WHEN IT WAS THAT YOU *COMPLETELY* LOST YOUR WAY?

TWO POINT FIVE HOURS UNTIL INCURSION.

THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM.

THANK YOU, WONG.

THAT WILL BE ALL.

OF COURSE.

AND WONG...

YES, DOCTOR?

I HAVE SOMETHING THAT I... THAT...

YES?

AM I A GOOD MAN?

NO.

TWO HOURS UNTIL INCURSION.

STARK RESIDENCE.
THE HAMPTONS.

SO, TONY... ARE YOU FALLEN?

A BROKEN MACHINE BEYOND REPAIR?

DID YOU DO YOUR BEST, ANTHONY? AND DID YOUR BEST ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE?

YOUR VAUNTED VIEW OF EVERYTHING-- HOW TO BUILD THE WORLD BETTER--WASN'T IT REALLY JUST A BLUE-PRINT OF YET ANOTHER DEATH MACHINE?

I GUESS THE QUESTION NOW IS: HOW DO YOU REVERSE-ENGINEER THE WORKS OF A DEVIL?

OR BETTER PUT, HOW DO YOU GET THE DEMON BACK IN THE BOTTLE?

I THINK WE KNOW, DON'T WE?

YOU *CAN'T.*

IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING. YOU FOOLISH, FOOLISH MAN.

YOU GAMBLED EVERYTHING AND *LOST.*

AT LEAST I'M GONNA BEAT YOU.

ONE HOUR UNTIL INCURSION.

THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING.

"WHY DID YOU COME HERE, T'CHALLA?"

I ASKED MYSELF, IF I HAD ONE DAY LEFT...IF I HAD JUST ONE MOMENT REMAINING, WHERE WOULD I WANT TO BE?

I DID NOT THINK OF DUTY-- WHERE I SHOULD BE, OR EVEN MY HOME-- WAKANDA. I THOUGHT OF BEING HERE... AND WITH *YOU.*

WHO WOULD EVER BELIEVE I WAS A ROMANTIC?

THAT'S FUNNY. I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE THE MOST ROMANTIC MAN I HAD EVER KNOWN.

I OFTEN THINK ABOUT WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN...

AND HOW THE UNIVERSE FOUND SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL UNFIT FOR THE WORLD.

WHY COULDN'T I HAVE JUST BEEN A KING WHO HAD FOUND HIS QUEEN?

BECAUSE IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO LAST...THAT'S ALL.

WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE TOGETHER...

AND I WAS NOT MEANT TO BE A QUEEN--OUR RESPONSIBILITIES ROBBED US OF THAT...OUR CHOICES COST US EVERYTHING.

NOW, PLEASE... YOU SHOULD GO...

THIS WAS A MISTAKE.

I WOULD HAVE LOVED YOU FOREVER...

ONLY NOW I KNOW THAT FOREVER DOESN'T EXIST.

BUT YOU, ORORO... YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A QUEEN.

TWENTY MINUTES UNTIL INCURSION.

CASTLE DOOM.

IT'S LATE...

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO DO THIS, REED?

WE AGREED ON A CERTAIN PROTOCOL, SUSAN.

SO I HONESTLY DON'T CARE *WHAT* TIME IT IS-- WE RADIOED AHEAD, GAVE THE PROPER CLEARANCE, AND AGAIN, AS AGREED, FOLLOWED ALL THE FORMS.

NOW I WANT TO CHECK ON *MY DAUGHTER.*

OUR BABY GIRL IS CURRENTLY LIVING WITH VICTOR VON DOOM, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO CONVINCE ME THAT, IN THIS INSTANCE, GOOD PARENTING MEANS CONSTANT SUPERVISION AND COURSE CORRECTING...

BUT FIRST THERE WAS YOUR URGENCY TO CHECK ON FRANKLIN AND THE REST OF THE FOUNDATION KIDS, THEN, IN THE SAME DAY, TO FLY HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD TO SEE VAL.

AM I MISSING SOMETHING?

NO, SUSAN...

I'M JUST SEEING *ALL* OF MY FAMILY TODAY.

SUSAN, REED...GOOD TO SEE YOU. HAVE TO SAY, WE'RE NOT USED TO SUCH IMPORTANT VISITORS AT THIS HOUR...SO WE'RE A BIT UNPREPARED. IS THERE...

NO NEED FOR POMP, KRISTOFF. WE'RE JUST HERE TO SEE VAL. IS THAT GOING TO BE A PROBLEM?

OF COURSE NOT. THIS WAY...

FATHER IS WAITING FOR YOU.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, RICHARDS?

HERE IN LATVERIA, DOOM DEMANDS THAT CHILDREN ALWAYS GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

HI, MOM.

SO WHAT DIRE EMERGENCY IS THIS?

IS THE WORLD ENDING EARLY? OR IS THIS SIMPLY THE KIND OF WEAK-WILLED SOFTNESS THAT PASSES FOR BEING A FATHER THESE DAYS?

SHUT UP, VICTOR.

HEY, KIDDO... I'VE MISSED YOU.

AND SHOULD I BOTHER TO MAKE THE SAME INQUIRY OF YOU, SUSAN, OR WOULD I JUST RECEIVE MORE BLUSTER?

NO...IT'S FINE. REED WAS INSISTENT THAT HE SEE FRANKLIN AND VALERIA TODAY, SO HERE WE ARE...

I WOULD NEVER DENY THE CHILDREN TIME WITH REED, VICTOR. WHATEVER HIS REASON.

OF COURSE. AND WHAT IS...THIS REASON?

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW.

AND DOES THAT CONCERN *YOU* AS MUCH AS IT DOES *ME*, SUSAN?

YES.

00:05:03

OH, DADDY...

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

FIVE MINUTES UNTIL INCURSION.

THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.

ONE MINUTE UNTIL INCURSION.

FIFTY SECONDS UNTIL INCURSION.

FORTY SECONDS...

THIRTY SECONDS...

TWENTY SECONDS...

TEN SECONDS...

VMMMM

INCURSION.

INCURSION PLUS TEN SECONDS...

INCURSION PLUS TWENTY SECONDS...

INCURSION PLUS THIRTY SECONDS...

INCURSION PLUS FORTY SECONDS...

INCURSION PLUS FIFTY SECONDS...

INCURSION PLUS SIXTY SECONDS...

WHAT THE HELL...?

THE BAXTER BUILDING.
CURRENTLY QUARANTINED.

SOMEONE WANT TO EXPLAIN WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

UH, OR, TECHNICALLY... WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN.

WHICH I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD ALL BE RATHER GRATEFUL FOR.

IT'S OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?

WE-- YOU--ALL OF US...WERE WRONG.

NO. THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT, BRUCE. WE'VE CATALOGED COUNTLESS INCURSIONS THAT REACHED A TERMINAL POINT. EVERY TIME THE SAME THING HAPPENS.

BEYOND THAT, ALL THE EVIDENCE UP TO NOW SUPPORTED OUR WORKING THEORY.

WELL, IT ONLY TAKES ONE OPPOSING INCIDENT TO DISPROVE THE TOTALITY OF OUR LITTLE HYPOTHESIS, REED.

STILL...I AGREE WITH YOU, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING ELSE AT PLAY HERE...SOMETHING WE'RE MISSING...

THERE HAS TO BE, DOESN'T THERE?

I MEAN... OF COURSE THERE IS...THERE MUST BE. BECAUSE IF NOT...

IF NOT...THEN YOU ALL KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

IT MEANS WE KILLED...A WORLD...FOR NOTHING!

NOTHING!

NOTHING!

SO, YES...WE HAD BETTER FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED, BECAUSE **NONE** OF US CAN LIVE WITH THIS IF WE DON'T.

T'CHALLA... MY FRIEND...I FEEL THE SAME WAY...

...BUT IF I'M HONEST, THEN I CAN'T HELP BUT CONSIDER--

BLACK BOLT? WHAT IS...

OH...OH, NO...

OH MY GOD...

WHAT IS IT, REED?

WHAT DID HE SAY?

HE...HE SAID:

"WHERE'S..."

"NAMOR?"

FOUR HOURS AGO.

EVERYTHING DIES.

YOU. ME. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET.

OUR SUN. OUR GALAXY. AND, EVENTUALLY, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

THIS IS SIMPLY HOW THINGS ARE.

IT'S INEVITABLE....

AND I ACCEPT IT.

WHAT I WILL NOT TOLERATE-- WHAT I FIND ***UNACCEPTABLE***--IS GOING QUIETLY, LIKE SOME MEWLING CHILD, BEFORE MY TIME.

THERE IS SOMETHING OUT THERE, COMING FOR US, TRYING TO KILL US ALL--AND I WOULD DO TO IT WHAT IT WOULD DO TO US.

BROTHERS. SISTERS. ALL THE ANGELS HAVE FALLEN, AND WE DEVILS ARE ALL THAT REMAIN...SO I ASK YOU...

WILL YOU HELP ME ***KILL WORLDS?***

RISE, THE CABAL.

EARTH-9004.

"THE THREE AVENGERS"

AVENGERS

IRON MAN

STEVE ROGERS

EX NIHILO

HULK

HAWKEYE

CAPTAIN AMERICA

THOR

CAPTAIN MARVEL

HYPERION

NIGHTMASK

ABYSS

MANIFOLD

SMASHER

STARBRAND

CANNONBALL

SUNSPOT

EIGHT MONTHS LATER

THE ALPHA WHAAN SYSTEM.

CORE REACTIONS ARE BECOMING UNSTABLE.

WE'RE LOSING IT.

NOT YET. WE CAN HOLD IT.

SING, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, *SING!*

IT IS THE SUN--LIFE-GIVING-- IT WANTS TO LIVE. IT HAS TO--

NO.

FIVE. FIVE EX NIHILII GONE. SUCH A HIGH COST...

AND FOR WHAT? ANOTHER FAILURE...ANOTHER DEAD STAR.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE--

YES, YOU DO, EX NIHILO...

THE STARS ARE SPEAKING CLEARLY, YOU ALL JUST REFUSE TO BELIEVE THE STORY THEY TELL.

THEY WANT TO DIE.

SO THEY DO.

THAT CANNOT BE, ABYSS. ALPHA WHAAN WAS A YELLOW DWARF. IT HAD A REMAINING NATURAL LIFE SPAN OF SEVERAL BILLION YEARS.

AND THERE WAS NO TAMPERING WITH IT--NO FOREIGN EXOTIC MATTER-- IT JUST *CHOSE* TO END.

I HAVE BEEN TELLING YOU THAT THE VERY FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSE IS COLLAPSING-- DIMINISHING SPACETIME.

I SEE IT, LIKE A GRID, TWISTING IN ON ITSELF. SWIRLING AROUND A COALESCING CENTER THAT HAS FINALLY FOCUSED INTO A SINGLE POINT.

CARE TO GUESS WHERE THAT IS?

AH, GLORIANA! EARTH!

I LOVE EARTH. FULL OF WONDER AND POSSIBILITY--I TWINNED IT MYSELF, EX NIHILA. DUELING ECOSYSTEMS.

WE SHOULD DESTROY IT.

BAH!

AT THE VERY LEAST...WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHY IT LIES AT THE CENTER OF THIS. WE HAVE TO FIND OUT...AND WE HAVE TO STOP IT.

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, EX NIHILII...

PLANETS, STARS, EVEN THE UNIVERSE ITSELF... *ALL OF THIS* IS COMING TO *AN END.*

BLARG! BLARG!

SHOULD WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT ALARM?

BLARG! BLARG!

JUST WAIT FOR IT, MANIFOLD.

BLARG! BLARG!

PANG

BLARG! BLARG!

KRSH

SAMUEL.

BLARG! BLARG!

BOBBY!

BLARG! BLARG!

BLARG! BLARG!

UFFF!

GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO, MAN.

BUT, HEY, MAYBE TURN OFF THE ALARM?

BLARG! BLARG!

RIGHT.

GOD, I HATE THIS THING, I CAN NEVER--

BLORP

BLARG! BLARG!

CRAP, IZZY'S GONNA KILL ME.

KSSH

BLARG! BLAAAAAARR

THERE YOU GO. ALL BETTER.

HEY! NICE SUIT.

THANKS.

SOME OF US *WORK* FOR A LIVING.

IT REALLY *IS* GREAT TO SEE YOU GUYS.

EDEN...YOU KEEPING THIS FELLA STRAIGHT? YOU KNOW HE LIKES TO GET INTO TROUBLE. DOES A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF DRAGGING OTHERS WITH HIM, TOO.

HONESTLY, I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FREE TIME ANYMORE TO FIND A HINT OF IT.

I'M TOO BUSY ACTING AS A LIAISON FOR A.I.M. AND OUR SECRET PRO--

HOLD ON A SECOND.

DID YOU JUST SAY YOU WERE WORKING WITH *A.I.M.*?

BOBBY, WHAT IN THE WORLD HAVE YOU GOTTEN INTO?

TURNS OUT THAT IF YOU RUN A SUPER-EVIL SCIENCE CLUB LIKE A LARGE CORPORATION, YOU'RE JUST AS VULNERABLE TO A HOSTILE TAKEOVER AS ANYONE ELSE.

SO I BOUGHT A.I.M.! THEY'RE ACTUALLY A PRETTY DECENT GROUP OF PEOPLE ONCE WE GOT RID OF THE MANAGEMENT. BUT NONE OF THAT REALLY MATTERS...

WHAT MATTERS IS IT'S TIME TO COME HOME, SAM. I NEED YOU.

ATTENTION!

BE ADVISED THAT THIS AREA IS NOW UNDER QUARANTINE.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RUN.

WHAT IN THE--

IT'S *THE IMPERIAL GUARD.*

GOD, THOSE GUYS OVERREACT TO EVERYTHING.

WELL... THEIR HOUSE, THEIR RULES, BROTHER.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CHOSE TO LIVE ON ANOTHER PLANET.

LATER.

ALL WE'RE ASKING IS THAT YOU CLEAR ANY TYPE OF PAN-DIMENSIONAL OR TRANSLOCATED ARRIVAL WITH THE GUARD BEFORE THEY ARRIVE.

OF COURSE.

BECAUSE WE HAVE VERY SENSITIVE SHIELDING AND--

YES, I UNDERSTAND AND I'M SORRY. WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

GOOD. BECAUSE I WANT TO STRESS JUST HOW SENSITIVE--

I HOPE YOU PEOPLE ARE HAPPY.

YOU WOKE THE BABY.

THE BABY WOKE THE MOTHER. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TIRED I AM?

THAT'S WHAT WE DO, ISN'T IT LITTLE GUY... WE CAUSE A RUCKUS.

HEY, IZZY...

YES, ROBERTO?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIS FACE?

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN TOO, BOBBY.

BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE?

THE ORISIAN FIELD.

WHERE IS IT?

TWENTY METERS. IT'S BEHIND YOU, STARBRAND, OVER YOUR RIGHT SHOULDER. BE CAREFUL...

HE'LL BE CYCLING IN THREE...TWO...

ONE.

SEE? NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, NIGHTMASK. THAT WAS THE LAST ONE. THESE OLD MODELS DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST US NEWER SYSTEMS.

BUT I THOUGHT ALL THESE *ALEPHS* WERE DONE WHEN THE BUILDERS LEFT THIS UNIVERSE.

THEY WERE...

WHICH IS WHAT MAKES THIS SO INTERESTING.

KRT3BRT NZRT98

AH!

THAT EXPLAINS THAT.

I'M ACCESSING ITS CORE AND TRANSFERRING THE DATA TO YOU, BUT I'M PRETTY POSITIVE THESE DIDN'T ORIGINATE IN *OUR* SLICE.

COMPRESSION PROBLEM?

YEP. CHECK OUT THE LAST RECORD BEFORE IT SLIPPED BACK INTO OUR SPACE.

BUILDER FRIGATE TRYING TO CUT THROUGH THE BLEED.

I'M SURPRISED ANYTHING MADE IT THROUGH.

I'D FEEL BAD IF THESE THINGS WEREN'T SUCH COLOSSAL JERKS.

BUT WHY WOULD THEY EVEN TRY? THE BLEED IS A DEAD ZONE NOW.

MAYBE THEY WERE RUNNING FROM SOMETHING WORSE THAN DEATH. TOTAL ERASURE? I WONDER...

BE-DOOP

...HOPE YOU RECEIVE THIS...SOONER THAN...FIGURED IT OUT...COLLAPSE OF MULTIVERSE...NEED YOU TO...HOME... SOON...

OH, MAN...I REALLY DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO EARTH AND THOSE... PEOPLE.

BUT SUNSPOT AND THE REST-- THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS, AND IF IT'S WHAT WE THINK, THEN THEY NEED TO KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO AS WELL.

SO WE SHOULD GO NOW?

WELL, YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER.

BUT...I *AM* GETTING YOUNGER.

IT'S A JOKE.

"I DON'T JOKE, KEVIN."

"THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT FUNNY, ADAM."

YOU LEFT RIGHT AFTER THE AVENGERS FELL UNDER S.H.I.E.L.D.'S AUTHORITY, BUT AFTER THAT THINGS REALLY COLLAPSED. MOST EVERYONE THAT WASN'T ON BOARD WENT THEIR SEPARATE WAYS AND THOSE THAT STAYED BECAME OBSESSED WITH... "THE TONY PROBLEM."

EVERYTHING CHANGED OVERNIGHT. EVERYTHING CHANGED PERIOD. LOOK AT YOU... YOU'RE A FATHER NOW.

YEP.

I ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAD CHILDREN IN TIMES LIKE THESE.

DON'T YOU WORRY?

BABY COMES, ALL YOU DO IS WORRY.

BUT YOU DON'T REGRET IT, DO YOU?

MORE LIKE YOU REGRET EVERY MINUTE BEFORE IT.

SO...NEW PERSPECTIVE THEN?

NEW EVERYTHING.

DID YOU LOOK AT ALL THE DATA AND STUFF I'VE BEEN SENDING YOU? THE SCHEMATICS AND THE BASIC IDEAS BEHIND THEM?

I DID. IT'S GOOD PLAN.

THEN WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR--COME HOME...LET'S GET STARTED.

IS IT IZZY? DOES SHE WANT YOU TO STAY?

SHE KEEPS A BAG PACKED, BOBBY--SHE'S DYING TO GO BACK. GOD KNOWS, THAT WOMAN IS READY TO KICK SOMEONE'S ASS OVER ALL THAT'S GONE DOWN.

I'M THE REASON WE STAYED SO LONG.

JUST WANTED TO STEAL AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE.

BUT IF IT'S TIME...

THEN IT'S TIME...AND LET'S GET ON WITH IT.

THE SAVAGE LAND.

THE REST OF THE TEAM WILL BE BACK TOMORROW. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE UP AND RUNNING THEN.

SO HOW ARE WE DOING ON TIME?

PRETTY GOOD, ACTUALLY.

THE PRINCIPLE'S BASICALLY THE SAME AS WITH PREVIOUS VERSIONS.

WE'RE ACCESSING A DEEPER, HOTTER VENT TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY ENERGY, BUT IT'S ALL BASICALLY ECONOMY OF SCALE.

PROPORTIONALLY GREATER NEEDS MEAN A PROPORTIONALLY GREATER POWER.

HAVE YOU TESTED IT YET?

WE'RE GETTING READY TO DO A DRY RUN OF THE CONVERTER, BUT THAT'S REALLY NOT GOING TO GIVE US AN ACCUR--

WAIT, HOLD ON... HERE WE GO.

OKAY. EVERYTHING'S GREEN.

I'M POWERING ON THE TRANSFORMER AND ACCESSING THE VENT.

ZZZAK

POWER SURGE!

SHUT IT OFF!

SHUT IT OFF!

"THAT WENT WELL."

HRMPT. IT'S TOUGH TO GAUGE BECAUSE WE'RE ONLY GOING TO GET ONE GO AT THE ACTUAL MACHINE, SO WE KEEP OVERLOADING THE TEST CONDUITS.

MAYBE IF WE DID IT IN A CYCLE, DUMP THE ENERGY INTO A LOOP...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...

JUST TRY AND HAVE IT WORKING BY THE TIME THE OTHERS RETURN. YOU KNOW HOW CERTAIN PEOPLE GET WHEN THEY THINK YOU ARE SPENDING THEIR MONEY UNWISELY.

YEAH. I KNOW HOW TO DO MY JOB, DAD.

FAIR ENOUGH. AND SPEAKING OF JOBS...HAVE YOU SEEN WHERE *THOR* IS TODAY?

I'LL GIVE YOU ONE GUESS.

GOOD NEWS. THE MACHINE'S ALMOST DONE.

I MEAN...I CAN'T REALLY TELL THE DIFFERENCE, BUT THE SMART PEOPLE SEEM TO BE PRETTY SURE WE'LL BE READY TO GO SOON.

WHICH, ONE COULD ARGUE, IS CAUSE FOR SOME *CELEBRATION.*

AND I CAN SEE YOU'VE ALREADY STARTED.

YOU MIND SHARING THAT?

SURE.

RIGHT NOW, THE PLAN IS JUST FOR YOU AND I TO GO THROUGH. THERE WAS TALK OF *POD* COMING AS WELL...

BUT I DON'T WANT THAT RESPONSIBILITY ON MY SHOULDERS. NOT WITH WHAT WE'RE BEING ASKED TO DO.

AGREED.

SO RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE JUST YOU AND ME...INTO THE BREACH AND BEYOND. I THINK IT'S FITTING.

AS WE'VE BOTH BEEN TESTED AND, AT TIMES, BEEN FOUND WANTING. YOU HAVE SUFFERED. YOU HAVE LOST. I HAVE TOO.

BUT NOW, BROTHER...

NOW WE BOTH RISE.

S.H.I.E.L.D. STATION: GOLGOTHA. (FORMERLY AVENGERS TOWER.)

ARCHANGEL COMMAND, THIS IS OVERWATCH. AS EXPECTED... WE HAVE ACTIVITY CONFIRMED INSIDE GOLGOTHA. SINGLE INTRUDER, I THINK. IT'S VERY HARD TO READ...

ACTIVATING A S.H.I.E.L.D. CONTAINMENT TEAM.

BELAY THAT... WE DON'T MOVE UNTIL WE HAVE CONFIRMATION.

EVERY DETECTION SYSTEM IN THE BUILDING WAS DEACTIVATED, DIRECTOR HILL...AND THE SUBJECT'S MIND IS LIKE...LIKE *QUICKSILVER*...

WELL THEN... TRY *HARDER*, SOLDIER...

"...ALL THE MONEY'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE, SO I WANT TO KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO THAT IS BEFORE I DROP THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD ON THEM."

WE'RE READY WHEN YOU ARE.

I'M IN THE LAB.

DATA LOOKS INTACT.

WE MAY HAVE LOST STARK, BUT WE'LL STILL HAVE ACCESS TO ALL HIS STUFF. COULD BE FUN TO TINKER WITH.

YOU READY TO RECEIVE?

SEND IT NOW.

BE-DOOP

ANY OTHER PROBLEMS?

NO. IT'S ALL QUIET HERE. A BIT *TOO QUIET...*

&%#@! NOW PROJECTING A PRETTY HIGH PROBABILITY THAT I'M TOAST.

ARE YOU SURE?

YEAH...BUT THE DATA'S ALMOST UPLOADED. ONCE THAT'S DONE, THEN I CAN JUMP OUT OF HERE...

"HOPEFULLY THE FASCISTS ARE RUNNING A LITTLE SLOW TODAY."

GOT HIM. IT'S *AMADEUS CHO.* SUPER-GENIUS WITH A STANDING ARREST-ON-SIGHT ORDER...JUST LIKE THE REST OF HIS FRATERNITY.

HE'S CONFIRMED: *ILLUMINATI.*

THAT'S IT THEN. DROP THE FIELD! I DON'T WANT HIM GETTING AWAY!
POWER UP THE GRID.
LET HIM KNOW HE'S IN A BOX.
OKAY... NOT SO SLOW...
THEY'RE ON TO ME.
JUMP OUT. NOW!
CAN'T. TRANSLOCATOR ISN'T WORKING. THEY MUST'VE ERECTED A NULL FIELD...I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNLESS I GET OUTSIDE ITS RANGE.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
NO CHOICE, REALLY...CHANGE THE VARIABLES.
TAKE THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.

OOOFFFF!

SORRY, OFFICER...

HE'S OUTSIDE THE BUILDING. ORDERING SECONDARY TEAMS TO CONVERGE.

NO. PULL EVERYONE BACK.

I'M SORRY, SIR?

"YOU HEARD ME. GET THEM ALL OUT OF THE WAY...

"ARCHANGEL IS SENDING IN THE BEST S.H.I.E.L.D. UNIT WE HAVE...

CRAP.

"...THE AVENGERS."

TARGET IN SIGHT...

HOW YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

STAY LOOSE. LET HIM THINK HE HAS OPTIONS.

BUT DON'T GIVE ANYTHING AWAY.

EVEN ENCASED AND BURIED THIRTY FEET UNDERGROUND...

I WOULD HAVE PICKED UP A POWER SOURCE LARGE ENOUGH TO EXTEND A NULL FIELD BEYOND ITS NORMAL LIMITATIONS.

SO I GUESS ALL I NEED TO DO IS BUY MYSELF FIFTEEN SECONDS TO CLEAR ITS RANGE.

TINK

COMMUNICATION INTERRUPT. WAR MACHINE DRONE A.I. OFF-LINE.

SLAVING TO SECONDARY SOURCE.

I COULD DO THAT IN MY SLEEP.

CAROL, LOOK OUT!

I'M FINE, HAWKEYE...

JUST RUNNING A LITTLE HOT.

SMASH

DON'T GET DISTRACTED.

REMEMBER, CHO'S SITUATIONALLY OPERATING AT SEVERAL MAGNITUDES BEYOND WHAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF. STAY ON TASK.

KEEP HIM OFF BALANCE FOR JUST A FEW MORE SECONDS.

"RETASKING DRONES."

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE. THERE'S A PATTERN.

THEY'RE SHOWING ME A TRAP, THEN A PATH OUT THAT'S TOO LINEAR, JUST TO SNATCH IT AWAY...PRESENTING A SECONDARY... OH!

THEY'RE LETTING ME BOX MYSELF IN.

CRAP.

CONTAINMENT FIE--

ARGGH!

MY HAND.

CRUNCH

NO TRANSLOCATING OUT *THIS* TIME, CHO.

NO GETTING OUT PERIOD.

YOU WERE RIGHT...

YOU CERTAINLY KNOW HOW THESE PEOPLE THINK.

CLICK

YES, I DO...

AMADEUS CHO, IN ACCORDANCE WITH S.H.I.E.L.D. EXECUTIVE ORDER: 2081, YOU ARE BEING DETAINED UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS...

WELL, UNTIL I FEEL LIKE IT. OR UNTIL WE LEARN THE LOCATION OF YOUR ASSOCIATES. STARTING WITH *ANTHONY STARK*, IRON MAN...

I CAN'T HELP YOU, LADY. I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.

NO ONE DOES--HE'S DISAPPEARED.

WHAT ABOUT BANNER? YOU KNOW, "DOC GREEN"?

NO COMMENT.

AND HANK PYM?

YOU KNOW WE'RE TRYING TO *SAVE* ALL OF YOU, RIGHT?

IF YOU HAD ANY IDEA HOW MANY TIMES I'VE HEARD THAT KIND OF EXCUSE...YOU WOULDN'T WASTE YOUR BREATH.

NOW. WHERE ARE BRIAN BRADDOCK AND STEPHEN STRANGE?

WHERE *ARE* THEY?

WHERE ARE HANK McCOY, T'CHALLA AND BLACK BOLT?

I'M NOT TELLING YOU A DAMN THING.

NOTHING.

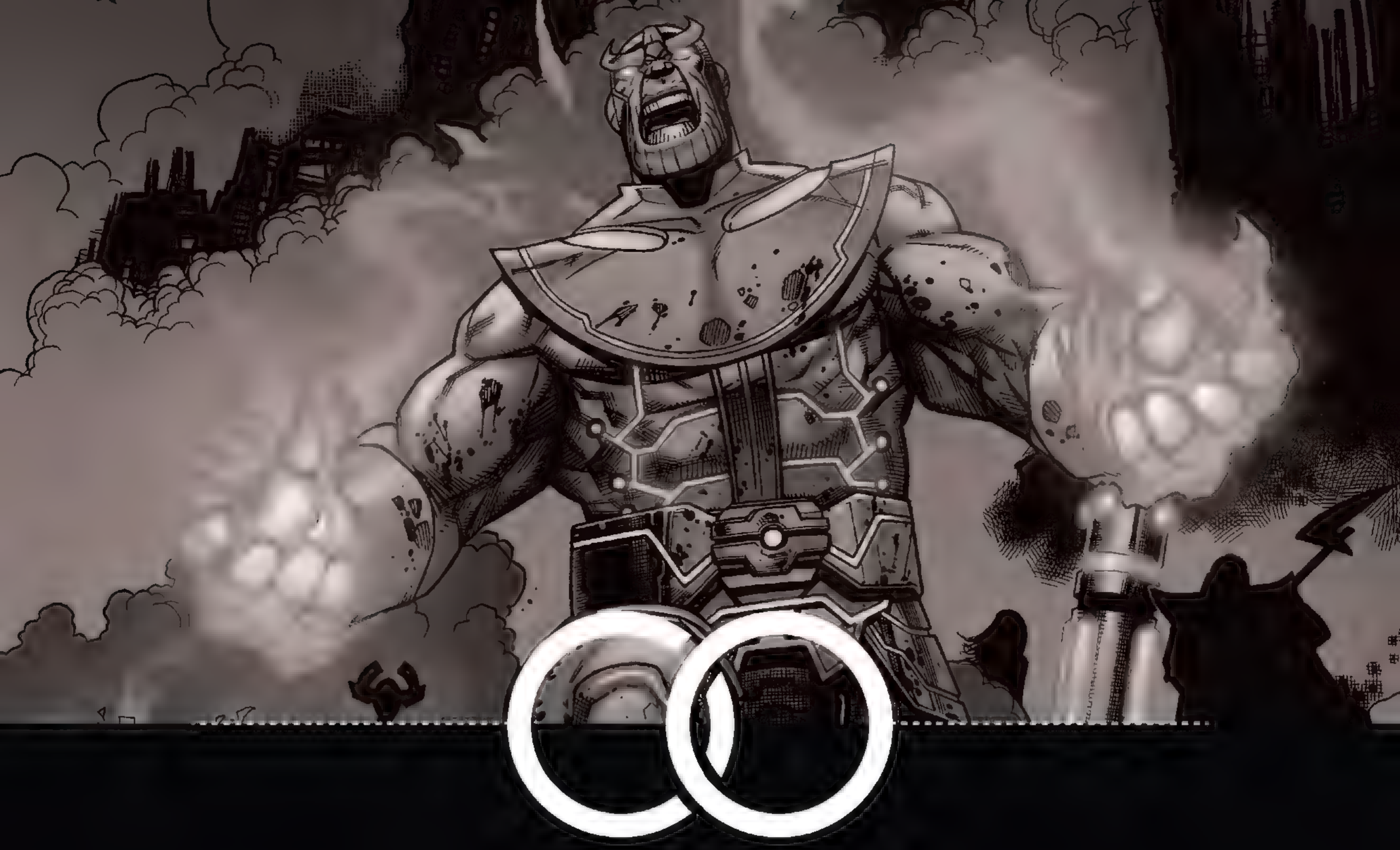
YES, YOU WILL. I PROMISE...

YOU *WILL* TALK.

WHERE ARE THE ILLUMINATI HIDING, CHO?

WHERE IS REED RICHARDS?

WHERE IS *MY HUSBAND?*



“THE CABAL”

LATVERIA.

YOU'VE BARELY TOUCHED YOUR DINNER, PRINCE NAMOR.

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

NO, KRISTOFF. EVERYTHING IS... PERFECT.

OF COURSE, ONE WOULD EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM *CASTLE DOOM.*

NO APPETITE THEN?

MORE OF AN ***EVOLVING PALATE.*** IT SEEMS I NO LONGER CRAVE THE FULL-BODIED TRAPPINGS OF THE WELL-HEELED.

THESE DAYS, SUCH SPOIL SEEMS INCREASINGLY DECADENT.

DON'T YOU THINK?

I DO NOT.

REALLY?

YOU DID UNDERSTAND WHAT I JUST TOLD YOU, YES? *THE THINGS* I HAVE BEEN *DOING?*

I DO.

EVERYTHING IS DYING, AND YOU FIND YOURSELF--OR PERHAPS BETTER PUT, *YOU PLACED YOURSELF--* AT THE VERY CENTER OF IT.

WE ARE *ALL* AT THE CENTER OF IT, VICTOR. EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING.

MY POINT IS REGARDING URGENCY: FORMAL DINNER WHILE THE WORLD BURNS SEEMS POINTLESS. IT SEEMS WASTEFUL.

BUT NAMOR, YOU MUST AGREE...

WE *ALL* HAVE TO EAT. REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

YES. ALL MEN. BUT ALL OF THIS...IS JUST FOR THE THREE OF US.

ARE THERE NOT PEOPLE IN LATVERIA WITH WHOM WE MIGHT SHARE IT? AS--WHAT'S THE SAYING?--

--YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU.

I MUST SAY, THIS NEWFOUND TENOR IS QUITE A DEPARTURE FOR YOU.

ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING YOU--AND YOUR FRIENDS--SET YOURSELVES ABOVE ALL OTHER MEN. SO...IS IT SINCERITY SPEAKING, OR IS THIS YOUR FALL?

IT'S A TIME OF CHANGE, VICTOR.

THAT'S THE SENTIMENT OF A PLUTOCRAT, NAMOR.

THE SENTIMENT OF THE UNDESERVING NOUVEAU RICHE WHO FALL BACKWARDS INTO MONEY AND THEREFORE POWER. WE ARE NOT THAT...WE ARE ARISTOCRATS.

WE WERE BORN BETTER.

YOU THINK THAT IF EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN MY COUNTRY DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE THIS FOOD FROM MY TABLE, THEY COULDN'T?

TELL ME, WHICH DO YOU THINK IS CLOSER TO TRUTH: THAT THEY LOOK UP AT CASTLE DOOM AND BELIEVE ITS WALLS ARE BEYOND BEING TORN DOWN, OR THAT THEY WOULD LAY DOWN THEIR VERY LIVES TO SEE THEM STAND FOR ALL TIME?

I LOVE MY PEOPLE-- I DO--BUT THEY ARE... MY PEOPLE.

I KEEP THEM SAFE FROM HARM. I GIVE THEM A BETTER LIFE. AND AT NIGHT, BEFORE THEY SLEEP, TO WHATEVER GOD THEY PRAY, THEY GIVE THANKS FOR ME.

SO, YES, DOOM EATS FIRST...AND HE EATS THE VERY BEST.

YOU USED TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

THE CABAL IS... UNMANAGEABLE.

"THEY ARE A WILD BEAST AT HUNT.

"A NECESSARY EVIL BECAUSE EVIL ACTS WERE NEEDED... AND THE GOOD AND NOBLE HEROES OF THIS WORLD WERE SO GOOD AND NOBLE THAT THEY WOULD NOT SACRIFICE THEMSELVES ON THAT ALTAR.

"THEY LOVED THEIR DAMN PIETY TO THE POINT OF EXTINCTION.

"BUT THE CABAL...

"IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS WE HAVE DESTROYED EARTH AFTER EARTH AND SAVED *SCORES* OF UNIVERSES."

BUT VICTOR...

THEY HAVE LEARNED TO RELISH THE ATROCITY.

"THEY SAVOR THE INHUMAN TASK THAT LIES BEFORE THEM.

"WE COULD SIMPLY DESTROY A WORLD--DO WHAT WE HAVE TO DO--AND BE DONE WITH IT...

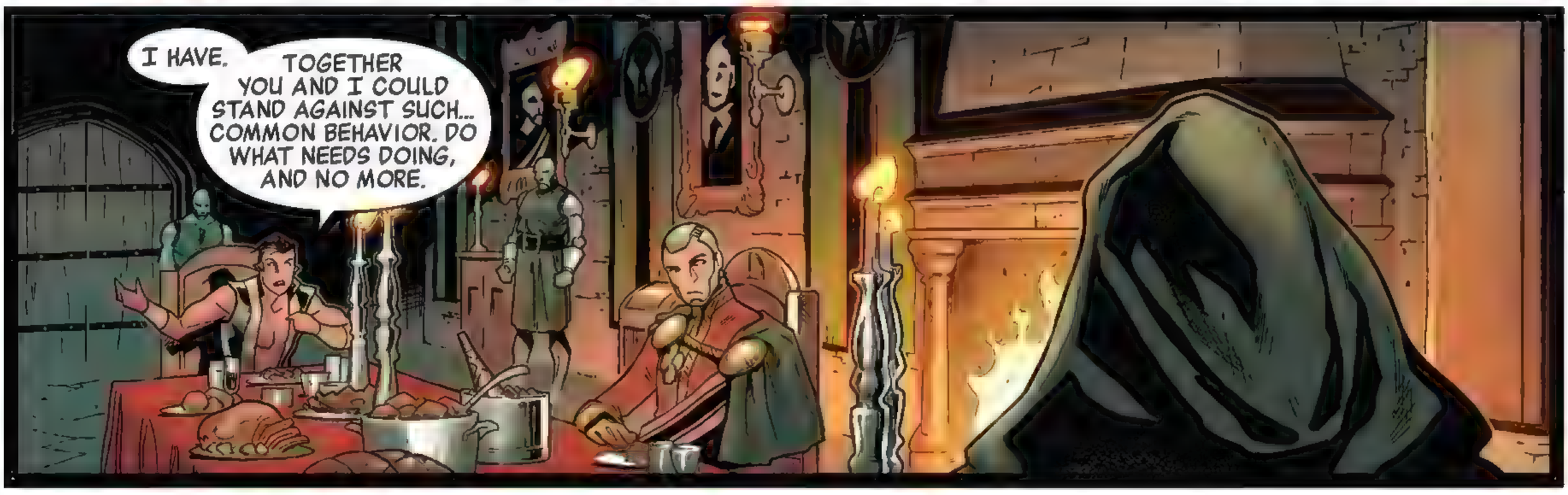
"BUT INSTEAD THEY LINGER AT THE TABLE AND, LIKE GLUTTONS, MAKE A ***BANQUET*** OF THE MEAL.

"THEY GROW IN SUCH ACTS WHILE I AM DIMINISHED--THE HORROR OF IT ALL HAS BECOME OVERWHELMING...

"AND THEY ARE BEGINNING TO SENSE MY HESITATION."

I NEED YOU.

WHICH EXPLAINS YOUR APPETITE AND YOUR REAL REASON FOR BEING HERE...
YOU'VE COME FOR HELP.


I HAVE.
TOGETHER YOU AND I COULD STAND AGAINST SUCH... COMMON BEHAVIOR. DO WHAT NEEDS DOING, AND NO MORE.

I DO NOT BEG, BUT I ALSO DO NOT LIE.
I NEED YOUR HELP, AND I WOULD BE...GRATEFUL FOR IT.

I THINK NOT.

WHAT?

YOU *COULD* HAVE COME TO ME FIRST.

YOU *SHOULD* HAVE COME TO ME FIRST...BUT YOU *DID NOT*. I CAN FORGIVE YOUR INITIAL DALLIANCES WITH RICHARDS AND THE OTHERS--THEIR NATURE IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO SUCH PRACTICALITY--BUT AFTER THAT, YOU CHOSE TO THROW IN WITH YOUR SUBHUMAN LOT. NOW YOU REGRET IT.

AND YOU DRAGGED THE STINKING CARCASS OF YOUR FAILURE TO MY DOOR.

VICTOR. PLEASE!

EVERYTHING WILL STAND OR FALL ON WHAT WE FACE.

YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT, NAMOR, AND MORE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED YOUR POSITION.

YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER...

DOOM IS NO MAN'S SECOND CHOICE.

NOW, YOU MUST EXCUSE ME... I HAVE OTHER CONCERNS.

KRISTOFF. CAN YOU...

IT WAS GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, PRINCE NAMOR...

BEST OF LUCK WITH YOUR GENOCIDE.

EARTH-71202.

I LOOK AROUND AND I WONDER...

WHERE IS XORN?

WHERE IS ***XORN***, BROTHER ORDER, WHO HID THE MORNING SUN BEHIND A MASK?

WHERE IS ***ZORN***, BROTHER CHAOS, WHO HID A BLACK HOLE BEHIND HIS?

WHERE ARE YOUR CHAMPIONS, CHARLES?

WHERE ARE YOUR *CHILDREN?*

I DO NOT KNOW.

I KNOW.

I KNOW...BECAUSE WHEN WE ARRIVED ON THIS BROKEN, BACKWARDS EARTH, YOU SENT THEM AND THE REST OF YOUR X-MEN TO STOP US...

TO STOP ALL THIS.

WELL... I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU...

A FINAL WORD FROM YOUR *CHAMPIONS*.

"WHAT IS THE TRUE VALUE OF BEING VALIANT, FATHER?

"WAS IT ENOUGH THAT I TRIED? OR WILL MY FAILURE DEFINE 'WHO I AM' IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL MY PREVIOUS 'GOOD' IS REDUCED...

"JUST AS I HAVE BEEN.

"BROTHER! YOU MUSTN'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF. FAILURE IMPLIES SOME POSSIBLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS. AND HOW COULD WE EVER HAVE ACHIEVED SUCH A THING?

"ARE WE NOT RABBLE? ARE WE NOT THE CAST-OUT?

"THIS ISN'T *OUR* FAULT AT ALL...

"_NO. I BLAME YOU, FATHER CHARLES.

"YOU CONVINCED US WE WERE DIFFERENT-- THAT WE WERE SPECIAL... AND THEN YOU SACRIFICED US FOR NOTHING.

"WE DESERVED *BETTER.*"

AND THEN THEY KISS.

WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH YOU?

WITH *ALL* OF YOU?

LOOK THERE, HUMAN.

THERE IS *THANOS*...AND HE HAS COME TO DESTROY YOUR WORLD SO THAT *ALL THINGS* MIGHT BE SAVED.

HE IS DEATH, AND AS SURE AS THERE IS ANY ASSUREDNESS REMAINING IN YOUR UNIVERSE, HE WILL SUCCEED.

ALL HE WANTS IN RETURN FOR A SWIFTER, LESS CRUEL END IS ONE SMALL THING.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

VERY LITTLE, PROFESSOR X.

A PITTANCE. A PORTION.

A TRIBUTE.

WHAT?

I WANT YOU TO *BEG.*

BEG ME TO KILL YOU, AND I WILL DO SO... QUICKLY.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, MUTANT, AND I AGREE--THEY'RE ***ANIMALS***, AREN'T THEY?

WHICH LEADS TO SOMETHING OF A QUANDARY, DOESN'T IT?

HOW CAN YOU TRUST AN ANIMAL TO KEEP ITS WORD? YOU CAN'T.

WHICH LEADS US TO THE MORE ***INTERESTING*** QUESTION, WHICH IS: WHY WOULD YOU SUCCUMB TO THE TYRANT'S REQUEST AT ALL?

YOU KNOW BY NOW THAT WE MUST KILL YOUR WORLD IF OURS IS TO LIVE. YOUR DEATH IS INEVITABLE...SO HOW COULD WE THREATEN YOU WITH THE PROMISE OF WHAT IS ALREADY ASSURED?

THAT ASSURANCE--THAT TRUTH--IS UNDENIABLE. A STRONG MAN WOULD HIDE BEHIND THE WALLS OF THAT TRUTH--HE WOULD MAKE A FORTRESS OF IT AGAINST WHICH NO SIEGE WOULD SUCCEED.

HE WOULD FIND...***SOME VICTORY*** IN THAT DEATH.

WHY THEN, FACED WITH THE FACTS AT HAND, AM I SO SURE THAT YOU ***WILL*** BEG?

AND THE WALLS CAME CRUMBLING DOWN.

PLEASE.

PLEASE... WHAT?

PLEASE KILL ME!

THE FALLEN CITY OF WAKANDA.
POPULATION: 1,309.

ALL CLEAR. NO LOCAL HEAT SIGNATURES, STRIKE LEADER. THERE'S NOTHING LIVING HERE.

OUR CURRENT CONCERN IS NOT MEN, SOLDIER, BUT *THE UNHOLY MACHINES OF MAXIMUS*-- AN INCURSION UNDERWAY MEANS THE CABAL HAVE LEFT WAKANDA.

REST ASSURED, WE WILL HAVE ONLY *ONE* CHANCE AT THIS.

YES, BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY? TO SAVE A WORLD THAT STOOD BY AND DID NOTHING TO SAVE OUR NATION?

WAKANDA CRUMBLED. BUT THEY JUST WATCHED ON THEIR TELEVISIONS, SOME EVEN MANAGED TEARS FOR OUR PLIGHT, BUT NO ONE *DID ANYTHING.*

WHY SHOULD WE SACRIF--

BA-BOOOOOOM!

UP...

GET... UP...

YOU HEARD HIM! UP! UP, YOU DOGS OF WAR!

FOR WAKANDA!

FOR WAKANDA!

IT'S STARTED.

THE HATUT ZERAZE HAVE DRAWN THEIR FIRE. THE DRONES SWARM TO PREVENT INFECTION.

QUICKLY THEN.

THIS PASSAGE LEADS DIRECTLY TO THE ARMORY.

HOW LONG DO WE HAVE, BROTHER?

THE INCURSION IS CURRENTLY ACTIVE, SO WE SHOULD HAVE TIME TO STEAL OR SCUTTLE THE REMAINING ANTI-MATTER BOMBS BEFORE ANY OF THE CABAL RETURN.

I WILL NOT LIE, T'CHALLA, IT CHAFES ME THAT THIS IS WHAT WE STOOP TO: BLACKMAIL.

YOU'LL FEEL BETTER IF YOU REFER TO IT AS *LEVERAGE*, SHURI.

I'D FEEL *BETTER* IF MY ENEMIES WERE DEAD.

OF COURSE, BUT EITHER WAY, ONCE THE WORLD DECIDED THAT WAKANDA WAS AN ACCEPTABLE PRICE TO PAY FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE PLANET, THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY SHAME TO BE CONSIDERED IN "HOW THINGS APPEAR."

WE'RE HERE.

LISTEN, SISTER...

WHEN THE NEXT INCURSION COMES, AND THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WITH THE MEANS OF ENSURING ITS SURVIVAL ARE THE DIASPORA OF THE GOLDEN CITY...

THEN WE WILL MAKE THEM CONSIDER *TRUE SHAME.*

I PROMISE YOU, I WILL MAKE THEM CHOKE ON IT.

NO MOTION. NO ENERGY SIGNATURES. THE ROOM'S CLEAR.

QUICKLY. WE NEED TO--

NO!

WAIT!

ZZZZAKKKK!

WHAT IN THE NAME OF--

"NoOOOOOO. NoOOOOOO.

"NO. DON'T TAKE *ME*. I WANT TO STAY AND BLOW THINGS UP.

"LIKE BILLIONS OF PEOPLE AND THE BIG, WEEPY HEARTS OF HEROES.

"BUT THEN YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF, CAN YOU REALLY CALL YOURSELF A *HERO* IF YOU'VE SPENT TIME BUILDING *BOMBS* LIKE ME?"

NO, MISTER BOMB.

NO YOU CANNOT.

MAXIMUS.

YOU KNOW, I WOKE UP THIS MORNING AND JUST KNEW I WAS GOING TO CATCH ME A VERY BIG FISH.

I SAW YOU SEE ME THINK I SAW YOU SEEING ME... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. MOVES WITHIN MOVES. CHECK. CHECKMATE.

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY THINK I'M NOT GETTING THROUGH THAT FIELD, MAXIMUS. YOU'RE SMARTER THAN THAT.

I KNOW.

YOU'RE NOT LOCKED OUT, T'CHALLA...YOU'RE LOCKED *IN*. AND HERE'S THE WARDEN COME TO PUT YOU IN YOUR PLACE.

THE FIRST RULE OF *THE BLACK ORDER OF THANOS* IS DO NOT SPEAK OF THINGS AS TRUE THAT YOU HAVE NOT SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD WITH YOUR OWN EYES.

YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE INCURSION REPORTS YOU GET FED, HUMAN.

THEY GAVE US YOUR CITY, YOU THINK THE PEOPLE WHO RULE THIS WORLD WOULDN'T LIE EVERY SINGLE TIME ABOUT WHO IS, AND WHO IS NOT, OFF-WORLD DURING AN EVENT?

OF COURSE NOT...

YOU KNOW HOW LITTLE THESE PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED. YOU KNOW HOW LITTLE THEY MATTER.

ZRRRNNN!

AAIIEEEEEE!

SHURI! T'CHALLA!

GO! FIND ANOTHER WAY!

LOOK HERE, WOMAN.

I AM HATUT ZERAZE--A *DOG* OF *WAR*. I WAS MADE TO DIE FOR MY COUNTRY...HAVE YOU EVER HAD SO MUCH CONVICTION?

PING! PING!

BOOO

BLACK PANTHER

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

MY BEST GUESS IS MAXIMUS IS COLLAPSING THE TUNNEL TO FOLLOW WHERE WE WENT. CRUDE, AND TIME-CONSUMING.

WHAT ARE *WE* DOING?

WE ARE LEAVING. NOW.

REED! ARE YOU THERE? WE'RE COMING IN HOT.

HOT? YOU MEAN...

YES. TRANSLOCATING.

YOU KNOW THEY CAN TRACK THAT NOW. IT TAKES THEM A FEW HOURS, BUT THEY HAVE THE CAPABILITY.

I KNOW, BUT WE HAVE TO RISK IT.

SO... FAILURE.

MORE. *BETRAYAL.*

I'LL TELL THE OTHERS TO PACK. BE SAFE, MY FRIEND.

SHURI, WE HAVE TO GO.

I'M NOT COMING, T'CHALLA...

WE FIGHT FOR SOMETHING. OVER THE IDEA OF WHAT WE COULD HAVE HAD...OF WHAT ONCE EXISTED...

BUT IS NOW NOTHING.

I SEE NOW, THE GODDESS... SHE KNEW WHAT WAS COMING.

ALL THAT REMAINS OF WAKANDA IS ASH AND RUBBLE. SEE, BROTHER... IT'S *ALL* NECROPOLIS NOW.

A CITY OF GHOSTS.

A KINGDOM OF NOTHING BUT THE DEAD.

I CAN TRUST YOU TO FINISH THIS?

I COULD DO BETTER-- I COULD *STAY.*

NO. YOU CAN'T.

THEN YOU HAVE MY WORD, SISTER.

I SWEAR IT.

I WILL MISS YOU, T'CHALLA.

I WILL SEE YOU SOON, SHURI.

HE RAN OFF AND LEFT YOU HERE ALL ALONE? WHAT HEART. WHAT COURAGE.

"THE FIRST RULE OF THE BLACK ORDER OF THANOS IS DO NOT SPEAK OF THINGS AS TRUE THAT YOU HAVE NOT SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD WITH YOUR OWN EYES."

YOU DON'T HAVE A DAMN CLUE WHAT YOU JUST SAW.

I KNOW WHAT I SEE *NOW.*

AND WHAT IS THAT?

NOTHING THAT BREATHES TOMORROW.

I OFFER YOU A PAINFUL DEATH OR A SHAMEFUL ONE, MY POOR, FALLEN QUEEN. WHICH WILL IT BE?

LATVERIA.

FORGIVE ME, FATHER...

...BUT REGARDING PRINCE NAMOR...IS HE NOT AN *ALLY*... HAS HE NOT *ALWAYS* BEEN?

AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED, I THINK.

NO, KRISTOFF. YOU MUST RECOGNIZE THE BROKEN FOR WHAT THEY ARE. ALL YOU HAVE--REGARDLESS OF BY WHICH ETHOS ONE IS GOVERNED--IS *LOYALTY TO WHO WE ARE.*

AND THAT MAN WHO SAT AT OUR TABLE? FALLEN. UNRECOGNIZABLE TO ME.

DROSS, TO BE QUICKLY CAST OUT.

IF THAT WERE NOT ENOUGH, THERE IS ALWAYS THE QUESTION OF WHO WOULD THE RELATIONSHIP PROFIT? IN THAT REGARD, HIS OWN WORDS DAMNED HIM...

AS WE CLEARLY UNDERSTAND MORE OF WHAT THREATENS THIS WORLD THAN *HE* DOES.

BE-BOOP!

IDENTIFY CONFIRMED. PLEASE STATE AUTHORIZATION PASSWORD.

EVERYTHING DIES.

ACCESS GRANTED.

AH, DOCTOR! WE WEREN'T EXPECTING YOU HERE THIS EVENING. IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?

NOTHING PRESSING, THINKER...NOTHING YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH.

MUCH LIKE WHERE I AM GOING TO BE. OR WHY...

YOUR ONLY CONCERN IS THE GRINDING INEVITABILITY OF *PROGRESS*...

AND WHETHER THAT PROGRESS PLEASES ME.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS GOOD FORTUNE, VICTOR...OR FATE SMILING FAVORABLY UPON THE LUCKY FEW...

THERE IS ONLY THE WORK... AND I DO IT WELL.

COME AND SEE YOUR PROGRESS, DOOM...

SEE WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

SINCE I ARRIVED, THE NATURE OF ***THE OBJECT*** HAS PREVENTED US FROM FULLY UNDERSTANDING ITS PARAMETERS.

EARLY ON, IT WAS CLEAR THE PIECE OF DEAD EARTH COLLECTED FROM THE LATVERIAN INCURSION WAS... I SUPPOSE THE BEST TERM WOULD BE ***BROADCASTING***... AT VARIOUS HARMONICS.

FOR SOME TIME NOW, WE BELIEVED THIS TO BE A LATENT TRANS-UNIVERSAL SIGNAL.

"THAT WHOEVER ENGINEERED THIS IS CREATING A SERIES OF TOUCHPOINTS--LIKE CELESTIAL BUOYS--MARKING WORLDS AMIDST THE MULTIVERSE."

AND HAVE YOU FINALLY CONFIRMED THESE SUSPICIONS?

OH...I'VE DONE BETTER THAN THAT...

CLICK

LOOK.

THIS... THIS IS FANTASTIC, THINKER.

YOU'VE MAPPED THEIR ENTIRE NETWORK.

YES. I CRACKED THE SEQUENCING OF THE ALGORITHM BEING USED TO VARY THEIR HARMONIC SIGNAL.

IT'S MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

OH?

YES.

LOOK CLOSER, KRISTOFF. HE'S REVERSE-ENGINEERED A WAY TO FIND WHO IS BEHIND THIS.

THIS IS PROGRESS, THINKER. WELL DONE.

IT'S TRUE. AND GLORIOUS. I DID. I DID FIND IT.

SO WHAT NOW, FATHER?

NOW?

NOW THOSE WHO BELIEVE THEY CAN MANUFACTURE DOOM WILL FACE DOOM *HIMSELF.*

YOU HAVE A PLAN, DON'T YOU, FATHER?

OF COURSE.

BUT I HAVE *MORE* THAN A PLAN...

I HAVE ALL THE PIECES NECESSARY TO BRING IT TO PASS...

...THANKS TO THE *MOLECULE MAN!*

LET THERE BE SUFFERING AND WOE TO ALL WHO STAND IN MY WAY.

“UNIVERSAL AVENGERS”

IOWA.
THE KANE FARM.

"YOU SEE ALL KINDS OF THINGS IN THIS WORLD-- EVENTUALLY, YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN IT ALL.

"BUT THEN SOMETHING NEW COMES YOUR WAY, AND SUDDENLY, THERE'S THAT THING YOU THOUGHT WAS LOST FOREVER: WONDER."

NOW LOOK AT YOU, LITTLE MAN...AREN'T YOU A WONDER?

YOU DID GOOD, IZZY.

GOOD GENES, DAD.

SPEAKING OF: GRANDPA... WHERE'S--

THE GROVE. THE SMALLER ONE IN THE FAR FIELD. YOU REMEMBER WHICH ONE I'M TALKING ABOUT?

YEAH.

MANIFOLD, HAVE WE GOT TIME?

UH-HUH. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, SAM. I'LL GET US BACK WHERE WE NEED TO BE.

YOU GUYS GO DO YOUR THING.

OKAY, KIDDO, TIME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL.

SO...YOU GOING TO TELL YOUR FATHER?

NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN THERE, SAMUEL.

"HEY, DAD, WE MIGHT NEED YOU TO WATCH THE KID, BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT IT...

"HE'S A MUTANT-SUPERHUMAN-SUPERGUARDIAN HYPER-GESTATED BABY THAT--AS LONG AS YOU DON'T THROW HIM INTO THE *SUN*--SHOULD BE JUST FINE, NO MATTER WHAT."

YEAH, OUR LITTLE BOY IS SOMETHING ELSE.

I WISH EVERYBODY HAD GOTTEN A CHANCE TO MEET HIM.

HEY, GRANDPA...

I MISS YOU SO MUCH.

DAN KANE
CAPTAIN TERROR
"GIVE 'EM HELL"

THIS IS *JOSIAH.*

HE'S ONE OF US.

THE DRAKE PASSAGE.

APPROACHING THE SAVAGE LAND NOW, MR. DA COSTA.

WE'LL BE LANDING IN THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES-- IS THERE ANYTHING YOU NEED BEFORE WE TOUCH DOWN?

NO. THANK YOU.

JUST GET US ON THE GROUND.

ENGLISH OR PORTUGUESE, PLEASE.

AH, YES...SORRY, SIR.

WELL, WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WAS: DO YOU EVER WONDER HOW WELL THE YELLOW MEN CAN SEE OUT OF THOSE HELMETS?

BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THEY CAN.

I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

PLUS, WE HAVE *BIGGER* CONCERNS.

THE SAVAGE LAND.

WELCOME HOME, SIR.

HOME IS *BRAZIL*, DOCTOR. IN MY PALATIAL ESTATE, OVERLOOKING A BEAUTIFUL BEACH, OWNING MY OWN TELEVISION NETWORK...

THIS...IS *BUSINESS*, AND I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THE MOST RECENT REPORT YOU SENT ME REGARDING THE INITIAL POWER GRID--THOSE FIGURES CANNOT BE RIGHT.

THEY WERE. BUT WE'VE ALSO HAD A BREAKTHROUGH...

WHICH IS WHAT YOUR ADVISORS ARE LOOKING AT NOW.

OH! THIS IS VERY CLEVER.

THEY SWITCHED POWER SOURCES.

YES. AN ANTI-MATTER INJECTION CORE GIVES YOU A HIGHER UPPER THRESHOLD OF USABLE ENERGY, BUT IT'S A BURST--AND THE BOTTLENECK PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS PRESENTED CONVERSION ISSUES.

BUT USING THE GEOTHERMAL VENT BENEATH THE SAVAGE LAND SOLVES THAT PROBLEM AS YOU CAN SLOWLY INCREASE THE POWER LEVELS. SURE, THE TOP END IS--

SHUT UP, ZEBRAS.

SO...IT WORKS.

IT DOES.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PROCEED NOW?

THE WORLD IS ENDING, DOCTOR... WHAT DO YOU *THINK* I WANT TO DO?

FIRE IT UP.

LATER.

IT'S HOLDING!

WE CAN MAINTAIN THIS CURRENT LEVEL INDEFINITELY. WE'RE STABLE AND READY TO PUSH POWER TO THE AUGER.

ACTIVATING THE MACHINE.

WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK?

ALL CURRENT MODELS PROJECT THAT THE COLLAPSING MULTIVERSE CONTAINS SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND REMAINING UNIVERSES.

AT THESE REDUCED LEVELS-- AND FROM OUR POSITION ON A FAR END OF THE UNIVERSAL SPECTRUM-- WE'LL BE ABLE TO INJECT/PROJECT THE TEAM HALFWAY ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE.

THAT FAR? DOES THAT MEAN...

YES.

IT DOES.

WELL...THAT'S HOW IT HAS TO BE, ISN'T IT?

RESPECTFULLY... *WE* HAVE MORE TO LOSE THAN YOU DO, SIR...SO I DON'T KNOW THAT IT *IS*.

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, MY STRIPED FRIEND.

WE'RE ALL EQUAL-OPPORTUNITY RISK TAKERS NOW.

EVERYONE IS GAMBLING... *EVERYTHING.*

OUR LIVES, OUR FUTURES... OUR FRIENDS...

"OPEN THE ACCESS DOOR."

FOUR HOURS AGO.

AND YOU'RE *SURE* ABOUT THIS?

WASN'T ANY MISTAKING IT, BOBBY.

IT WAS AN *ALEPH FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE*--PARTIALLY DAMAGED FROM ITS MIGRATION HERE, BUT DEFINITELY BUILDER-ENGINEERED AND PRODUCED.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE PART OF THIS THAT CONCERNS YOU, THOUGH. TELL HIM, ADAM.

THERE'S A *COMPRESSION* PROBLEM.

MANY THINGS EXIST IN THE SPACE BETWEEN UNIVERSES. NOT IN RELATION TO THE FERTILE GROUND OF "REAL SPACE"... LIKE THIS UNIVERSE...

BUT IN COMPARISON TO HOW FEW SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXIST IN NO-SPACE. LIKE THE ALEPH WE FOUND.

AS WE APPROACH THE END OF EVERYTHING, OVERFLOW AND OVERLAP ARE GOING TO LEAD TO A LESS...ORDERLY STATE OF DECAY.

THIS IS A PROBLEM.

I'M SORRY, GUYS...I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THAT MEANS.

WE DON'T THINK THE ALEPH *JUMPED* HERE. WE THINK IT WAS *PUSHED THROUGH* BY THE COLLAPSE OF EVERYTHING.

LIKE ADAM SAID...THERE'S A COMPRESSION PROBLEM.

AND, NOT FOR NOTHING...BUT THAT THING BEHIND YOU IS *FREAKING ME OUT.*

YOU MEAN *POD?*

YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT POD, STARBRAND. EVERYTHING IS COOL. POD'S WITH THE PLANET, WHICH MEANS POD'S WITH *US.*

TELL THEM, POD.

EVERYTHING IS COOL.

OKAAYYY...

ANYWAY, THE POINT: YOU PUT OUT THE CALL FOR US TO COME BACK AND HELP YOU WITH *YOUR* PROBLEM... ONLY FOR US TO DISCOVER *OUR* PROBLEM IS THE SAME AS *YOUR* PROBLEM.

AND?

WE WANT IN.

"WELL, WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT?

"COULD YOU CONFIRM WHAT WE'VE FOUND?

"PLEASE...TELL US, ARE WE *RIGHT?*"

JUST A MOMENT MORE, DOCTOR.

IF THIS WAS JUST SOME...STANDARD-LIVING, CARBON WORLD, A SURFACE SCAN WOULD PROVIDE MORE THAN A SUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF DATA.

THIS WORLD, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY EX NIHILO, SO IT SHOULD BOTH LIVE...AND *LIVE*.

THREE HOURS AGO.

"BUT, AS WE BOTH KNOW, NEW GENESIS WAS ABATED, AND THE SENTIENT *NEW WORLD* WAS KILLED BY ANOTHER BUILDER SYSTEM: *STARBRAND*.

"THIS MEANS A CURSORY GLANCE IS NOT ENOUGH, AS THE NEW WORLD'S DEATH OBSCURES THE STATE OF THE OLD.

"WE NEED TO DIG DEEPER."

AH, THE EX-NIHILII HAVE REACHED THE CORE.

WE CAN *SEE* THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

THIS WORLD HAS SCARS.

THESE LIGHTS-- THE POINTS YOU SEE HERE--HAVE BRUSHED UP AGAINST FOREIGN UNIVERSAL BODIES.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ABYSS?

FOREIGN? UNIVERSAL?

LIKE HYPERION. BUT NOT JUST A PERSON.

AN ENTIRE ECOSYSTEM.

YOU MEAN A WORLD.

WHICH CONFIRMS WHAT WE'VE LEARNED ON OUR OWN.

WHICH MEANS THE S.H.I.E.L.D. FILES WE'VE SEEN ARE TRUE. WHICH AGREES WITH WHAT CAPTAIN ROGERS TOLD THE AVENGERS MONTHS AGO.

YES. BUT THIS IMPLIES IT'S BOTH AN ONGOING AND *LINGERING* PROBLEM. EITHER WAY...YOU NOW HAVE YOUR INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION.

CAN WE PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THE NEW WORLD IS DEAD-- THE OLD WORLD IS SURELY DYING.

YOU SHOULD EXPAND YOUR PLANS TO INCLUDE US.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE RISKS?

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT *LIFE*, ROBERTO DA COSTA...

MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND IT.

THEY PERCEIVE IT IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN EXISTENCE--THEIR OWN BIRTH, THE BIRTH OF THEIR CHILDREN...

THEY MEASURE LIFE BY THE TIME THEY HAVE IN THEIRS. THIS IS LIFE AS AN EXTENSION OF LOVE, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH IT...

BUT IT IS NOT LIFE UNFETTERED. IT'S NOT LIFE AS A PRIMAL FORCE. IT'S NOT THE VIOLENT STRUGGLE OF LIFE--IT'S A BUBBLE MAKING ITS WAY TO THE SURFACE OF A SEA.

I SEE LIFE AS A PERFECT SPHERE, CALLED A PLANET, RESTING THE PERFECT DISTANCE FROM A PERFECT SUN.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE UNIVERSE IS NOTHINGNESS. I KNOW THIS...IT IS THE ABSENCE OF LIFE.

THIS IS HOW I SEE IT.

UNDERSTAND? LIFE IS A MIRACLE IN THE FACE OF THE LIFELESS VOID.

WHAT YOU FACE NOW IS THE END OF ALL MIRACLES. A RETURN TO AN EQUILIBRIUM CALLED NOTHING.

"BUT I AM EX NIHILO-- I AM LIFE.

"AND I WILL NOT STAND FOR SUCH A THING.

"I *HAVE* TO GO."

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO, FATHER."

TWO HOURS AGO.

IF I STAYED, WHAT WOULD THAT MEAN?

WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE WOULD THAT BE?

NOT JUST FOR THE OTHERS, BUT FOR YOU? HAVEN'T I TAUGHT YOU? *SERVICE* MATTERS. *SACRIFICE* MATTERS.

HOW ABOUT THIS THEN:

WE DON'T *WANT* YOU TO GO.

THEN I WOULD SAY: I DON'T WANT TO EITHER.

YES. I HAVE TO...

BUT YOU HAVE TO.

I AM NEEDED.

IT FEELS WRONG.

Hmmm?

SENDING YOU OUT THERE, THOR. IT FEELS WRONG.

HOW MIGHT THAT BE?

I'M JUST SAYING...

THE AUGER IS GOING TO THROW ALL OF YOU TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MULTIVERSE.

WELL...*I'M* STAYING HERE TO FIX THE AVENGERS WHILE *YOU'RE*...

UNDERGOING A DIFFERENT TRIAL.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF UNIVERSES AWAY.

SOUNDS VERY FAR.

YOU CERTAINLY DON'T MEASURE THE DISTANCE IN *MILES.*

REGARDLESS... I STAY HERE AND TRY AND FIX THE AVENGERS--A GROUP OF WHICH YOU WERE A FOUNDING MEMBER...

WHILE I GO TO SMITE AT THE VERY HEART OF WHAT CAUSED...ALL THIS.

I WISH YOU WELL IN REPAIRING THE DREAM, ROBERTO... I HOPE THAT WHEN THE MOMENT COMES, MY WILL IS AS STEADY AS YOURS. MY HEART AS RIGHTEOUS.

SOON... WE SHALL SEE.

THOR.

YES?

YOU UNDERSTAND, RIGHT?

THERE'S NO COMING BACK.

"YOU'RE ALL GOING TO DIE OUT THERE."

AYE. IT IS AN END.

BUT TO DIE... STRIKING DOWN THE GREAT DESTROYER?

THAT WOULD BE A FITTING ONE.

"SO IF YOU PRAY, PRAY THAT I AM NOT FOUND WANTING...

"AND INSTEAD AM WORTHY OF SUCH A GLORIOUS END."

“WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE WORLD WOKE UP”

DAY ONE.

I THINK WE'VE LOST OUR WAY.

ALL WE NEED IS A LITTLE LIGHT.

ANY LUCK ON THAT FRONT, HENRY? TIME'S A FACTOR.

I THINK SO...

AND YOU CAN'T RUSH GREATNESS, REED. WITHOUT PATIE--

BZZZ!

AH! THERE. THAT SHOULD DO IT.

TRY IT NOW.

HERE GOES.

CLANG!

HRMPT!

HOW'D YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THIS PLACE?

MY FATHER TOLD ME.

HE USED TO WORK HERE FOR A WHILE WITH HOWARD STARK.

SOME SECRET-SOCIETY, CLANDESTINE JOB WITH THE UNSEEN ARCHITECTS OF HISTORY. APPARENTLY, TO HEAR HIM TELL IT, ONE OF THEIR JOB DESCRIPTIONS WAS "ASSISTING THE ORDERLY DEMISE OF THE WORLD."

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THIS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN SUCH A GOOD IDEA...

OR MAYBE IT'S PERFECT.

"OH, WE BROTHERS OF ABYSS. LOST SOULS WHO LIGHT THE FALL. DOWN TO THE DEPTHS OF OUR WELL-EARNED HELL."

NICE.

BYRON?

NO...

BRADDOCK.

THE PERIMETER'S SECURE. NO ONE'S GETTING IN HERE.

IS THAT ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT WE'RE LOCKED IN?

I'M THE LAST CAPTAIN BRITAIN LEFT, REED. I'VE LEARNED NOT TO TAKE RISKS THAT I DON'T HAVE TO--WHAT'S IN HERE IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LOSE. SO...

YES, WE'RE LOCKED IN.

ENGAGING THE COMM SYSTEM. HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE LEFT ON THE CLOCK?

BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE WE HAVE TIME TO CLOAK THE SIGNAL.

WE DON'T--HE SHOULD BE INSIDE IN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.

HOWEVER, IT'S NEW YORK, SO HE'LL BE SCATTERING DATA OFF HUNDREDS OF NODES.

HE'LL STILL BE AT RISK...BUT WE WON'T BE A FACTOR.

MANHATTAN

LOCKING ON NOW.

S.H.I.E.L.D. STATION: GOLGOTHA

SGPS HAS A FIX. TRIANGULATING...

HE'S INSIDE ALREADY.

STARK'S LAB

CONNECTING BIOPACKAGE NOW...

WE SHOULD HAVE AUDIO IN THREE...TWO...

CONNECTED.

YOU'RE ACTIVE, CHO.

WE'RE READY WHEN YOU ARE.

I'M IN THE LAB. DATA LOOKS INTACT.

WE MAY HAVE LOST STARK, BUT WE'LL STILL HAVE ACCESS TO ALL HIS STUFF. COULD BE FUN TO TINKER WITH.

YOU READY TO RECEIVE?

SEND IT NOW.

BE-DOOP

HENRY, ARE WE GETTING IT?

WE'RE GOOD. SIGNAL'S STABLE.

ANY OTHER PROBLEMS?

NO. IT'S ALL QUIET HERE. A BIT **TOO QUIET...**

€%#@! NOW PROJECTING A PRETTY HIGH PROBABILITY THAT I'M TOAST.

ARE YOU SURE?

YEAH...BUT THE DATA'S ALMOST UPLOADED. ONCE THAT'S DONE, THEN I CAN JUMP OUT OF HERE...

HOPEFULLY THE FASCISTS ARE RUNNING A LITTLE SLOW TODAY.

OH, NO...

S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIERS ON SITE.

TRANSFER COMPLETE, REED.

JUMP OUT. NOW!

CAN'T. TRANSLOCATOR ISN'T WORKING. THEY MUST'VE ERECTED A NULL FIELD...I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNLESS I GET OUTSIDE ITS RANGE.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

NO CHOICE, REALLY...

CHANGE THE--

DAMN.

THEY HAVE HIM.

NO SIGNAL

DAY TWO.

OKAY. IT'S CONNECTED.

ANYONE CARE TO EXPLAIN TO ME WHY WE DON'T JUST TRY TO CONTACT CHO THE WAY WE DID EARLIER?

THE HUNTED MUST ALWAYS BE MORE CAUTIOUS THAN THE HUNTER, CAPTAIN.

TO SAY NOTHING OF THE FACT THAT HE'S PROBABLY BEING DETAINED IN A S.H.I.E.L.D. BLACK BOX FACILITY...BUT WE CAN'T BE SURE, CAN WE?

OH. AND THAT COMMUNICATION GEAR HE WAS WEARING EARLIER? MOST LIKELY CONFISCATED.

BUT IT'S WORSE THAN THAT...

S.H.I.E.L.D.'S GOTTEN INCREDIBLY AGGRESSIVE.

IT WAS BAD ENOUGH WHEN THEIR PSI-AGENTS STARTED RUNNING GLOBAL SWEEPS FOR OUR BRAIN SIGNATURES, BUT IN THE LAST COUPLE MONTHS, THEY'VE SYSTEMICALLY ATTACKED AND CRIPPLED EVERY TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE WE'D PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE JUST STARTED TRAVELING COACH, CAPTAIN? THREE WEEKS AGO, THEY CRACKED OUR TRANSLOCATING ABILITY--WE JUMP SOMEWHERE AND THEY'LL TRIANGULATE THAT SIGNAL AND BE ON TOP OF US FASTER THAN WE CAN SET UP OUR MOBILE LAB.

HOW DO YOU EXPECT THAT ALL THIS COULD POSSIBLY WORK?

WELL, CAPTAIN, THEY'RE SMART...

BUT THEY'RE NOT *THAT* SMART.

YOU KNOW THE IMPLANT I GAVE YOU MONTHS AGO WHEN YOU JOINED US?

OF COURSE.

YOU SAID IT WAS NECESSARY--THAT YOU ALL HAD THEM.

CORRECT. AND WHILE ITS PRIMARY FUNCTION IS DISTORTING OUR BRAIN SIGNATURES TO EVADE DETECTION, IT ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE MOST ADVANCED TRACKING/RECORDING SYSTEM EVER INVENTED.

BY A HUMAN.

THAT'S TRUE. THANK YOU, HENRY.

ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW TO STRIVE FOR.

REGARDLESS...THOUGH IT WAS NOT CONSTRUCTED FOR THIS EXACT USE, IN THEORY, THIS DEVICE CAN BE ACCESSED REMOTELY AND GIVE US ACCESS TO A...LIVE FEED OF WHAT CHO IS EXPERIENCING.

THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO *DETECT* THAT?

THE DEVICE ALGORITHMICALLY HOPS MODES AND FREQUENCIES THOUSANDS OF TIMES A MILLISECOND. UNLESS YOU KNOW THE PARAMETERS, THE DEVICE IS UNDETECTABLE.

OUR *ACCESS* OF THE DEVICE... THAT'S A LITTLE MORE TRICKY. MOST S.H.I.E.L.D. FACILITIES ARE HARD-SHIELDED AGAINST SUCH ATTEMPTS OF THIS NATURE...

BUT I THINK, BY BOUNCING--AND AMPLIFYING--THE SIGNAL THROUGH THE PLANET'S DESCENDENT CORE, I MIGHT BE...

AH!

HELLO, AMADEUS.

GOOD TO SEE YOU.

IT WORKED.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

NOW?

NOW WE WAIT FOR THEM TO GIVE US SOMETHING.

FOUR HOURS LATER.

LOOK...IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ASKING TO SPEAK TO MY LAWYER OR ANYTHING CRAZY LIKE THAT.

I MEAN, I'M DUMB, BUT I'M NOT *THAT* DUMB...

I'M JUST LOOKING FOR SOMETHING LIKE MAYBE A PB&J...

OR REALLY *ANY* CONSUMABLE BELONGING TO THE SANDWICH FAMILY.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT? A SANDWICH?

THAT'S ALL IT'S GOING TO TAKE TO SHUT YOU UP?

PLEASE, DEAR GOD, GIVE HIM A SANDWICH.

YEAH.

BUT I'M PARTICULAR, SO I'M GONNA NEED YOU TO CUT THE CRUST OFF.

AND THEN, WHEN YOU'VE DONE THAT, I WANT YOU TO TAKE THAT SANDWICH AND SHOVE IT STRAIGHT UP YOUR--

AGENT, THAT'S ENOUGH.

WELL, ISN'T *THIS* INTERESTING?

HMM.

YOU CAN ALL GO.

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

HELLO, AMADEUS.

I'M SUSAN RICHARDS. I'LL BE YOUR INTERROGATOR.

WE'VE MET. AND EVEN IF WE HADN'T...I'VE SEEN YOUR PICTURES.

I BELIEVE WE HAVE SOME OF THE SAME ACQUAINTANCES.

UH-HUH. IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN GET YOU BEFORE WE GET STARTED?

WELL, I'M JUST *DYING* FOR A SANDWICH.

I'M AFRAID WE'VE RUN OUT.

FIGURES. SPEND BILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS BUILDING FLOATING WEAPONS PLATFORMS AND REALLY, REALLY NICE JAILS, AND THEN SCRIMP ON DINNER.

SOUNDS EXACTLY LIKE THE GOVERNMENT.

YOU WORRIED ABOUT HOW YOUR HARD-EARNED TAXES ARE BEING SPENT?

IT'S HILARIOUS YOU THINK I PAY TAXES.

I AM ABSOLUTELY NOT SURPRISED YOU THINK YOU'RE ABOVE THE LAW.

OH, WHAT YOU CALL THE *LAW*, I CALL THE *SUBJUGAT--*

HERE'S THE THING: I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, AND I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS *WRONG*. I KNOW IT FOR A FACT. AND WE'RE GOING TO SIT IN THIS ROOM UNTIL YOU GIVE ME WHAT I NEED.

OH, YOU KNOW THINGS, HUH?

DID YOU *KNOW* THAT ONLY FOUR PERCENT OF PEOPLE THINK THEY HAVE A BELOW-AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE? FOUR PERCENT.

AND WERE YOU ALSO AWARE THAT TESTS SHOW THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN LACK OF INTELLIGENCE AND ASSUREDNESS? WHEN YOU HEAR SOMEONE SAY THEY KNOW SOMETHING "FOR A FACT"-- PICTURE THEM WITH A SIGN AROUND THEIR NECK THAT SAYS, "I'M AN IDIOT."

PRESENT COMPANY EXCLUDED, OF COURSE. BUT STILL... IT'S SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

WELL, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT *YOU*, AMADEUS, AND I JUST SO HAPPEN TO HAVE YOUR S.H.I.E.L.D.-PROCURED TEST SCORES RIGHT HERE.

AND SURPRISING NO ONE, YOU DO NOT HAVE BELOW-AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE. THIS IS, IN FACT, A FACT.

LET'S SAY, HYPOTHETICALLY, THAT THERE WAS THIS PERSON WHO TESTED OUT IN THE TOP FIVE PERCENT ON ALL THE STANDARD I.Q. EXAMS. ACROSS THE BOARD. CONSISTENTLY.

NOW, YOU MIGHT ARGUE THAT THIS IS, CLEARLY, A VERY SMART, VERY SPECIAL PERSON. BUT I'D BE WILLING TO BET ALL THE MONEY IN MY POCKET AGAINST ALL THE SANDWICHES IN YOURS THAT THIS PERSON WOULD TELL YOU THAT YOU ARE WRONG.

DO YOU KNOW WHY?

WHY?

BECAUSE THIS PERSON WOULD KNOW THAT BEING IN THE TOP FIVE PERCENT STILL MEANS THAT THERE ARE **250 MILLION** OTHER PEOPLE OUT THERE AT LEAST AS SMART AS HE IS.

ONE OF 250 MILLION. WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THAT?

NOTHING. NOT A THING.

YES, BUT THAT STORY DOESN'T REALLY APPLY TO YOU...

AFTER ALL, YOU'RE ONE OF THE TEN SMARTEST HUMANS ON THE PLANET EARTH, AREN'T YOU?

THE POINT OF THE STORY IS, I KNOW PEOPLE WHO ARE SMARTER.

SO DO I. BETTER THAN YOU EVER WILL. MAYBE BETTER THAN I KNOW MYSELF.

WANT TO KNOW WHAT ELSE I KNOW?

SMASH

I AM GOING TO CATCH ALL OF YOU.

ESPECIALLY MY HUSBAND.

AND WHAT IF HE TOLD YOU HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL HIM THEN?

I'D TELL HIM I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE... AND TO GET USED TO SLEEPING IN A CELL.

DAY THREE.

ANY LUCK?

ALMOST THERE.

HONESTLY, IF CHO HADN'T STUCK AROUND TO THE VERY END, THIS WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED--STARK'S ENCRYPTION IS SIMPLY TOO WELL DONE.

WELL, WHAT'S THE WORD? DID CHO FALL ON HIS SWORD FOR A GOOD CAUSE, OR DOES THE GRAIL ELUDE US?

I'M IN.

WE MAY HAVE LOST STARK--

HE'S NOT LOST.

WE JUST HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET.

EITHER WAY, WE'VE FINALLY GOT OUR HANDS ON HIS DATA.

DE-DOOP

WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?

PYM?

TOGETHER, TONY AND I ENACTED SEVERAL... *CONTINGENCY PLANS* WHEN WE FIRST LEARNED OF WHAT WE WERE FACING. YOU KNOW ABOUT SOME OF THOSE:

THE AVENGERS MACHINE, THE EXPLORER PROTOCOLS, OTHER, LESS PRACTICAL IDEAS...

YES. AND THEN BEYOND THAT, THERE WERE THE THINGS WE CREATED INDIVIDUALLY. TONY-- HE BUILT WEAPONS-- AND HE BUILT THEM WELL.

THIS IS *SOL'S HAMMER.*

HOW MANY FILES ARE THERE?

WELL, THEY'RE NOT ALL RELEVANT. THERE APPEARS TO BE A DATABASE OF PHONE NUMBERS AND A TRULY SKETCHY SCORING SYSTEM, CORPORATE HOLDINGS, BANK ACCOUNTS...

BUT AT FIRST GLANCE, THE WEAPONS FILES APPEAR TO BE...ROBUST.

I'M COUNTING *SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE* SEPARATE DESIGNS.

SEE...THIS IS WHY EVERYONE THINKS YOU PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS UP TO SOMETHING.

BECAUSE YOU ARE.

OKAY. WE NEED TO CATALO--

HOLD ON! EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION.

IT'S T'CHALLA.

REED! ARE YOU THERE? WE'RE COMING IN HOT.

HOT? YOU MEAN...

YES. TRANSLOCATING.

YOU KNOW THEY CAN TRACK THAT NOW. IT TAKES THEM A FEW HOURS, BUT THEY HAVE THE CAPABILITY.

I KNOW, BUT WE HAVE TO RISK IT.

SO... FAILURE.

MORE. BETRAYAL.

I'LL TELL THE OTHERS TO PACK. BE SAFE, MY FRIEND.

OKAY, YOU HEARD THE MAN.

WE'RE MOBILE IN UNDER AN HOUR.

BEAST, CAN YOU PLEASE...

ALREADY ON IT, REED. ANY PARTICULAR MESSAGE?

JUST MAKE SURE YOU EMBED THE CODE.

IT'S TIME WE GOT BETTER INTEL.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR TYPE OF PHRA--

INCOMING!

FWAASSHHHH!

WHAT HAPPENED?

WE LOST IT ALL. THE GOLDEN CITY HAS CRUMBLED.

WAKANDA IS GONE.

“ARCHANGEL”

ROME.

THIS IS ARCHANGEL COMMAND. WE HAVE JUST ENTERED ITALIAN AIRSPACE FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN WITHOUT STATE CLEARANCE-- SO WE ARE ON A COUNTDOWN.

LET'S DO THIS WITH SPEED, PEOPLE. ADVANCE TEAM?

ON THE JUMP DECK. AT THE READY.

WAITING ON YOUR ORDER TO ENGAGE.

YOU HAVE IT.

ENGAGE.

GO! GO! GO!

WE'RE DOWN.

TARGETING SYSTEM ONLINE.

WE'VE ACQUIRED THE TRANSLOCATION RESONANCE. THIS *IS* THE LOCATION.

WE'VE GOT A LOCK.

THE DRILL'S ONLINE AND THE SITE IS PREPPED.

WHAT ABOUT THE CARGO?

READY TO DEPLOY.

OKAY. DRILL'S STABLE...

TUNNELING THE PACKAGE.

CRASHHH

ARCHANGEL...

THIS IS *HAWKEYE*. I'M IN THE CITY.

FROM THE SKY WE'RE GETTING NOTHING ON THERMALS.

AND MOTION TRACKING IS UNRELIABLE DUE TO THE DENSITY AND AGE OF THE CITY.

SO BE CAREFUL.

YEAH. WILL DO...

BUT YOUR CONCERN MIGHT BE WASTED--I THINK WE'RE TOO LATE. AGAIN.

NOTHING DOWN HERE BUT ME AND--

IT'S A QUANDARY, ISN'T IT? A CHOICE THAT REPRESENTS A COMMITMENT TO ACTION.

GOT SOMETHING.

STAND BY...

OH.

DAMN.

WHAT IS IT?

TOUGH TO EXPLAIN. YOU NEED TO GET DOWN HERE, STEVE...

YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO SEE THIS FOR YOURSELF.

LATER.

FORENSIC TEAMS ARE COMBING THROUGH THE PLACE WITH A FINE-TOOTHED COMB.

WE'RE USING PRETTY MUCH EVERY TRICK WE HAVE. MICROSCOPIC D.N.A. TRACERS, RESIDUE SNIFFERS LOOKING FOR LATENT POWER SIGNATURES...

EVEN THE PSI-AGENTS ARE WORKING IN A LOW-YIELD TEMPORAL CAGE TO TRY TO PICK UP ANY STRAY THOUGHTS THEY MIGHT HAVE LEFT BEHIND.

LET ME GUESS, HILL: WE CAN CONFIRM THEY WERE HERE... BUT OTHER THAN THAT... NOTHING.

AND THEY'VE SLIPPED AWAY ONCE MORE.

WELL...WE'VE GOTTEN PLENTY OF D.N.A. HITS. CONFIRMATION OF MISTER FANTASTI--

DON'T DO THAT.

DO WHAT?

DON'T REFER TO THESE PEOPLE BY *THOSE NAMES.* THAT'S NOT WHO THEY ARE ANYMORE.

THEY DON'T GET TO HAVE THAT.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR.

AS I WAS SAYING, WE HAVE CONFIRMATION OF *RICHARDS, MCCOY* AND *BANNER*. WE THINK THERE WAS A FOURTH...MAYBE A FIFTH. STILL WAITING FOR FULL SCANS TO COME IN.

HOWEVER... YOU NEED TO SEE WHAT HAWKEYE FOUND.

HUH.

SOME KIND OF HOLOSOLID PROJECTION.

IT'S ON A LOOP--THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

...OR IS IT MINE?

CLICK

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT WE'RE GOING TO PLAY THIS GAME UNTIL OUR VERY END, BEAST.

AB IGNE IGNEM, DOCTOR-- WE HAVE ALL EARNED OUR JUST PORTION.

AND I SUPPOSE FATE IS SIMPLY THE EXTERNAL MANIFESTATION OF OUR CHARACTER'S ESTABLISHED LIMITATIONS.

HMM. IS IT YOUR MOVE, OR IS IT MINE?

CLICK

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT...

THEY LOOK TIRED.

IT'S CALLED LOOKING GUILTY, SUSAN.

WELL, ANY THOUGHTS AS TO WHAT WE SHOULD DO WITH THIS?

"IS IT YOUR MOVE... OR IS IT MINE?"

YOU THINK?

COULD BE.

CLICK

QUEEN TO KNIGHT FOUR.

CLICK

HELLO, STEVE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

HOW DOES IT--

I BET YOU'RE WONDERING HOW WE KNOW IT'S YOU.

IT'S TRUE THAT THE INTERACTIVITY ON THIS PROGRAM IS FAIRLY LIMITED-- I MEAN, I COULD ONLY ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH IN THE FIVE MINUTES I SPENT SETTING THIS UP--BUT THE QUESTION--

HOW DO THEY KNOW IT'S ME?

WELL, IT'S A FAIR ONE TO ASK. SO HERE'S YOUR ANSWER:

STUDY PERSONALITIES LONG ENOUGH AND YOU GET TO KNOW THEM LIKE THE BACK OF YOUR HAND.

EVERYONE LIKES TO THINK THEY'RE ***SPECIAL.*** THAT THEY ARE SOME UNIQUE COMBINATION OF PERSONALITY, HISTORY AND COGNITIVE ABILITY...

BUT THE TRUTH IS, THOSE ARE JUST TICKED BOXES THAT GIVE US INSIGHT INTO HOW EACH PERSON IS HARD-WIRED.

I DON'T BUY THIS AT ALL.

HE'S BLUFFING.

NOW...IT'S POSSIBLE YOU THINK I'M BEING DISINGENUOUS.

BUT WOULD YOU BE SURPRISED TO KNOW THAT THERE'S A NINETY-FIVE PERCENT CHANCE THAT EITHER CLINT, SAM...OR SUB-DIRECTOR HILL IS WITH YOU? THERE'S AN EIGHTY PERCENT CHANCE THAT YOU BROUGHT ALL THREE.

I'D TAKE THOSE ODDS.

AND, OH MY STARS, THERE'S EVEN A SIXTY-EIGHT PERCENT CHANCE THAT YOU ASKED ***SUSAN RICHARDS*** TO JOIN YOU. AND IF YOU ASKED, THERE'S AN EIGHTY-THREE PERCENT CHANCE SHE SAID YES. *AB INTRA.*

SO WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

WHY, PRAY TELL, AM I TELLING YOU *ALL THIS?*

IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET *SERIOUS* ABOUT CATCHING US...YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH YOUR SHORTCOMINGS AND ADJUST ACCORDINGLY.

AFTER ALL, WE'RE NOT PLAYING A GAME WITH SOME KIND OF *ARBITRARY RULES*, STEVE.

WE'RE PLAYING *YOU.*

BETTER UP YOUR GAME...

SON.

STEVE, I...

NO. WE'RE DONE HERE. I WANT EVERYONE TO PACK UP.

GIVE ME THE ROOM.

KZZZK
KSSSH

LATER.

AND SO I ASK YOU...WHOM CAN WE TRUST? THE LUCKY FEW WHO DARE TO STAND ABOVE US, LOOKING DOWN IN PITY AT THOSE WHO NEED THEIR PROTECTION?

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

THE LUCKY FEW WHO, BECAUSE THEY KEEP US *SAFE*, DECIDE WHAT WE *SHOULD* AND SHOULD *NOT* KNOW ABOUT THE REAL THREATS WE FACE?

OR SHOULD WE TRUST IN THE TRUTH? AND FACE THE THINGS THAT WE ALL FEAR TOGETHER KNOWING THAT, AT THE VERY LEAST, WE DECIDED OUR OWN FATE?

WHY ARE YOU WATCHING THIS AGAIN, SUSAN?

WE JUST GOT THE ANALYTICS BACK FROM THE GUYS IN THE HEAD SHOP--THE BEHAVIORAL STUDIES GROUP.

WE HAD AN UNGODLY AMOUNT OF CAMERAS IN THE U.N. BUILDING--JUST A TON OF DATA--AND EVEN THOUGH IT WAS GOING TO TAKE THEM FOREVER, I HAD THEM GO THROUGH AND ANALYZE EVERYTHING...

YOU KNOW, CATALOG THE RESPONSES TO THE GOOD AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH.

MOST OF WHAT WE'LL LEARN ISN'T ACTIONABLE...BUT AT LEAST WE'LL FIND OUT WHO ALREADY KNEW WHAT SHE WAS GOING TO SAY, WHO WAS SYMPATHETIC, AND WHICH OF OUR...*FRIENDS* SOON DECIDED THE BEST BET WAS LAYING DOWN WITH THE ENEMY.

HERE IT COMES.

THESE ARE ALL REASONABLE QUESTIONS. THEY ARE THE QUESTIONS I ASKED MYSELF WHEN I FOUND OUT EARLIER TODAY THAT "THE LUCKY FEW" HAVE **SECRETS.**

NOT THE NORMAL, SOMEWHAT EXCUSABLE SECRETS WE ARE USED TO, BUT, FRANKLY, THE MOST TERRIFYING THING I HAVE EVER HEARD.

I LEARNED OUR WORLD--OUR **UNIVERSE--IS DYING.** AND THESE...LUCKY FEW...

THESE... **HEROES** HAVE KNOWN THIS FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

I FIND THAT UNACCEPTABLE, AND I'M SURE YOU DO AS WELL.

NOW WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT.

BE-DOOP

HEAD SHOP SAYS THAT LESS THAN FIVE PERCENT OF THE U.N.'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY DIDN'T KNOW OR WASN'T IMMEDIATELY SYMPATHETIC.

UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS, STEVE?

NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF THE MEMBER NATIONS DECIDED WHAT TO DO AT A *LATER DATE.*

THE LEADERS OF THOSE COUNTRIES-- INFORMED BY WHAT THEY LEARNED AND HOW THEIR CITIZENS RESPONDED--SAT DOWN AND MADE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO BUY IN.

DOES THAT MAKE THEM MORALLY REPUGNANT...OR DOES IT MAKE US LOOK LIKE RUBES?

STILL, YOU GOTTA ADMIT--TWO DAYS LATER AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, *TERRAX THE TRULY ENLIGHTENED* MADE THE CABAL'S CASE WELL.

WE DID NOT CAUSE THIS, AND JUST LIKE YOU...WE DID NOT ASK FOR THIS FATE. BUT UNLIKE *THE ILLUMINATI,* WE WILL NOT HIDE IT FROM YOU--WE WILL NOT SIMPLIFY THE MORAL DILEMMA. WE WILL NOT TAKE *THAT CHOICE* FROM YOU-- AS THAT IS *YOURS* TO MAKE.

SO, PLEASE... CHOOSE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT. SOUNDLY.

KNOWING WE ENSURED THAT THE NEXT DAY THE SUN WILL SURELY RISE. FOR YOU...

AND FOR ALL MANKIND.

THEN YOU GOT UP AND TRIED TO BEAT HIM TO DEATH WITH YOUR CANE.

WHICH, OF COURSE, ONLY MADE THEIR CASE STRONGER. AND A WEEK LATER--AFTER ALL THE SCREAMING, YELLING AND EVENTUAL COMPROMISE--EVERYONE HAD AGREED TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY AND LET THE CABAL DO THE UNTHINKABLE.

SO WHEN THEY ASKED FOR WAKANDA IN EXCHANGE, WHO COULD DENY THEM? FOR ALL SOULS HAD ALREADY BEEN SOLD.

I JUST REALIZED...I NEVER ASKED:

WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT?

NOT LONG AFTER YOU DID.

DID REED TELL YOU WHAT THEY DID TO ME?

"YES."

AND HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

FURIOUS. BUT EXHAUSTED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE...

IT'S THE *AMBIGUITY*. SEE, THERE'S A PIECE OF ME THAT WANTS TO ALWAYS BELIEVE IN HIM UNCONDITIONALLY.

BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY TIMES HE'S LEFT ME IN THE DARK? AND *THIS?* WELL...

IF YOU ASK ME, IT SOUNDS LIKE BOTH OF YOU GOT IN BED WITH THE WRONG PEOPLE.

THE PRESIDENT CALLED, STEVE--HE'S *FURIOUS*. WE STILL HAVE HIS SUPPORT, BUT WE CAN'T PUT HIM OUT ON A LIMB WITH THE OTHER NATION STATES. HE SAID TO REMIND YOU...

FULL DISCRETION INSIDE U.S. BORDERS, BUT YOU NEED AUTHORIZATION FOR THESE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

AND I'VE GOT THE LATEST STATUS REPORT.

YOU WANT TO DO IT NOW...OR DO YOU NEED TO CALL HOME?

THE PRESIDENT CAN WAIT, CAROL.

DO I NEED TO LEAVE?

NO.

YOU CAN HEAR THIS. I ACTUALLY LIFTED YOUR CLEARANCE RESTRICTIONS AFTER THE THING WITH CHO.

WE'RE SEVERAL MONTHS IN AND YOU'VE MORE THAN PROVED YOURSELF.

WELCOME TO THE RABBIT HOLE, SUSAN.

GOING DOWN.

THIS IS FOOTAGE FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ORBITAL PLATFORM STATIONED OVER WAKANDA SHOWING THE ORIGINATION OF THE TRANSLOCATION SIGNATURE WE TRACED TO ROME.

CONFIRMED AS THE *BLACK PANTHER.*

WE ALSO GOT AN ADDITIONAL D.N.A. HIT FROM THE ROME SITE.

CONFIRMED AS *BRIAN BRADDOCK, CAPTAIN BRITAIN.* WHICH WOULD MAKE THIS ONLY OUR SECOND CONFIRMATION OF HIM BEING ATTACHED TO THE ILLUMINATI. STILL, IT'S CONFIRMATION...

MAKES SENSE. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CORPS POLICING MANY WORLDS. MIGHT ALSO EXPLAIN WHY WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM MUCH.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE MIGHT HAVE SOME INSIGHT THAT WE DO NOT.

HE'S GOT FAMILY. CAN WE REACH OUT?

BETSY BRADDOCK--*PSYLOCKE*--IS PROTECTED BY THE X-NATION. WE CAN'T GET TO HER, THE SAME WAY WE CAN'T GET TO BEAST.

WE'D HAVE TO CATCH HER OFF BASE...WHICH MEANS DIVERTING ASSETS. IS THAT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO DO?

NO. WE CAN'T SPARE THEM.

OUR OWN GOVERNMENT BARELY TOLERATES US, AND AFTER TODAY, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ZERO ROPE BEYOND U.S. BORDERS.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER UNACCOUNTED FOR ILLUMINATI?

WHAT ABOUT *BLACK BOLT?*

STILL SEEMINGLY DISCONNECTED FROM THE OTHER ILLUMINATI MEMBERS, BUT WE'RE EVEN *LESS* ACCEPTED IN *ATTILAN* THAN ELSEWHERE.

ANYTHING ELSE?

ROBERTO DA COSTA HAS BEEN MAKING SOME NOISE.

YOU KNOW HOW WE WERE WONDERING WHERE HYPERION DISAPPEARED TO? APPARENTLY, HE'S COORDINATING THE MERGER OF TECHNOLOGICAL ASSETS BETWEEN HIS NEW BOSS AND HIS BOSS'S MOST RECENT ACQUISITION.

SUNSPOT BOUGHT *A.I.M.?*

UH-HUH. REVEALED IT TO HIS SHAREHOLDERS TWO DAYS AGO. APPARENTLY, HE'S SECRETLY BEEN IN CONTROL THROUGH A HOLDING COMPANY FOR SOME TIME.

HE BOUGHT *A.I.M.*

THAT'S... THAT'S...WELL, KIND OF BRILLIANT.

I TELL YOU, PEOPLE WITH MONEY ARE WORTH KEEPING AROUND.

MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE TRIED A BIT HARDER TO DO THAT.

...

ANYTHING ELSE?

THE U.N. IS STILL CORDONING OFF ALL INCURSION POINTS. WE'RE PRETTY SURE THERE WAS ONE AROUND THE SAME TIME WE PICKED UP THE TRANSLOCATION SIGNAL. BUT YOU KNOW THAT ALREADY.

SO, YEAH... I GUESS THAT'S IT.

THAT'S IT?

IT IS.

OKAY.

SUSAN?

YES, STEVE?

PLEASE EXCUSE US.

YOU WANT TO FUSS AT ME ABOUT THE DA COSTA THING?

YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.

YEAH.

SO?

SO I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE. THIS IS ALL THE INFORMATION I HAVE.

WHAT ABOUT *YOU?* IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

HAVE YOU FOUND OUT SOMETHING?

CAROL, WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS SEVERAL TIMES. I DON'T KNOW WHERE *NATASHA* AND *JESSICA* DISAPPEARED TO. I DON'T.

WE FOUND THEIR R.F.I.D. IMPLANTS IN EL PASO--THEY'D BEEN REMOVED--AND THEN THEY BOTH JUST DISAPPEARED. WHICH, I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU, THEY ARE BOTH TRAINED TO DO.

IF THEY DON'T WANT TO BE FOUND, AND THEY'RE CAREFUL, THEY'RE NOT *GOING* TO BE FOUND.

YOU THINK THEY JUST QUIT?

I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT?

MAYBE THEY RAN OFF TO JOIN THE GUY WITH ALL THE MONEY.

...

WE SHOULD'VE DONE BETTER WITH THAT.

YES, WE SHOULD HAVE.

I'M GOING TO BED.

OKAY.

AND CAROL.

YEAH?

DON'T EVER COME INTO ONE OF THESE MEETINGS AGAIN WITHOUT HAVING A REPORT ON RICHARDS OR STARK. EVEN IF IT'S JUST TO SAY THERE'S NOTHING NEW TO REPORT. NOT EVER AGAIN.

THEY ARE PRIORITY ONE. WITH A BULLET. ALL. YEAR. LONG.

YOU UNDERSTAND?

YES, SIR.

OKAY. GOOD NIGHT.

BE-DOOP

SO, PLEASE... CHOOSE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT. SOUNDLY.

KNOWING WE ENSURED THAT THE NEXT DAY THE SUN WILL SURELY RISE. FOR YOU...AND FOR ALL MANKIND.

YOUR DAY'S COMIN' TOO, PAL.

TWO DAYS LATER.

YOU CAN COME OUT. I'M ALONE.

I KNOW.

YEAH, BUT DO YOU KNOW BECAUSE YOU CHECKED, OR BECAUSE YOU TRUST ME?

I'LL *ALWAYS* TRUST YOU, SUSAN.

Subway

EXIT

YEAH...BUT, YOU KNOW... *I* WOULD HAVE CHECKED.

I KNOW THAT TOO.

I LIKE THE BEARD.

IT'S MY ROAD BEARD.

WELL...I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS, SPORT. YOU WERE *WRONG.*

OH?

YEAH, THEY LET ME IN TWO DAYS EARLIER THAN YOU PROJECTED.

WELL, MRS. RICHARDS, YOU'RE A VERY CHARMING AND PERSUASIVE WOMAN...

I WATCHED YOU INTERROGATE CHO.

I *THOUGHT* I MIGHT'VE BEEN SPEAKING TO AN AUDIENCE. HOW DID YOU BEAT THE SECURITY OF...YOU KNOW WHAT, NEVER MIND. IT'S BETTER IF I DON'T KNOW.

HERE'S HIS PRISONER I.D. NUMBER, TRAVEL SCHEDULE AND TRACKING FREQUENCY. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO INTERCEPT HIM, BUT...

THEY COULD BE FEEDING YOU BAD INTEL. THE FREQUENCY WILL BE ENOUGH--WE'LL RETRIEVE HIM NEXT TIME WE CHANGE LOCATIONS.

I MISS YOU.

I CAN TELL. *AB INTRA?*

THAT WAS CLUMSY.

I MISS YOU TOO.

HOW ARE THE KIDS?

AS GOOD AS THEY CAN BE. THEY BOTH MISS YOU VERY MUCH. FRANKLIN IS... WELL...

HE STILL THINKS HE DISAPPOINTED YOU.

I SHOULD NEVER HAVE DONE THAT.
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE ASKED...I...
I KNOW. WE ALL KNOW.
HE'S JUST HURTING.
AND VAL?
VAL...VAL BELIEVES SHE'S ONTO SOMETHING. VAL THINKS SHE AND THE OTHER KIDS HAVE FIGURED OUT THE SOLUTION TO YOUR PROBLEM.
WHAT?
SHE WANTED ME TO GIVE YOU THIS.
DID YOU LOOK AT IT?
I DID. AND THEN I ALMOST DIDN'T BRING IT.
BUT YOU DID...
AND NOW I HAVE TO GO.

I THINK WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME, REED. IF WE'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING, IT MUST BE SOON.

OH, AND ONE OTHER THING...

VAL'S SPECIAL AND I LOVE HER DEARLY. BUT SHE'S NOT PERFECT, SHE'S NOT *ALWAYS* RIGHT--SHE HAS THE SAME FLAWS YOU DO.

SHE'S JUST A CHILD...

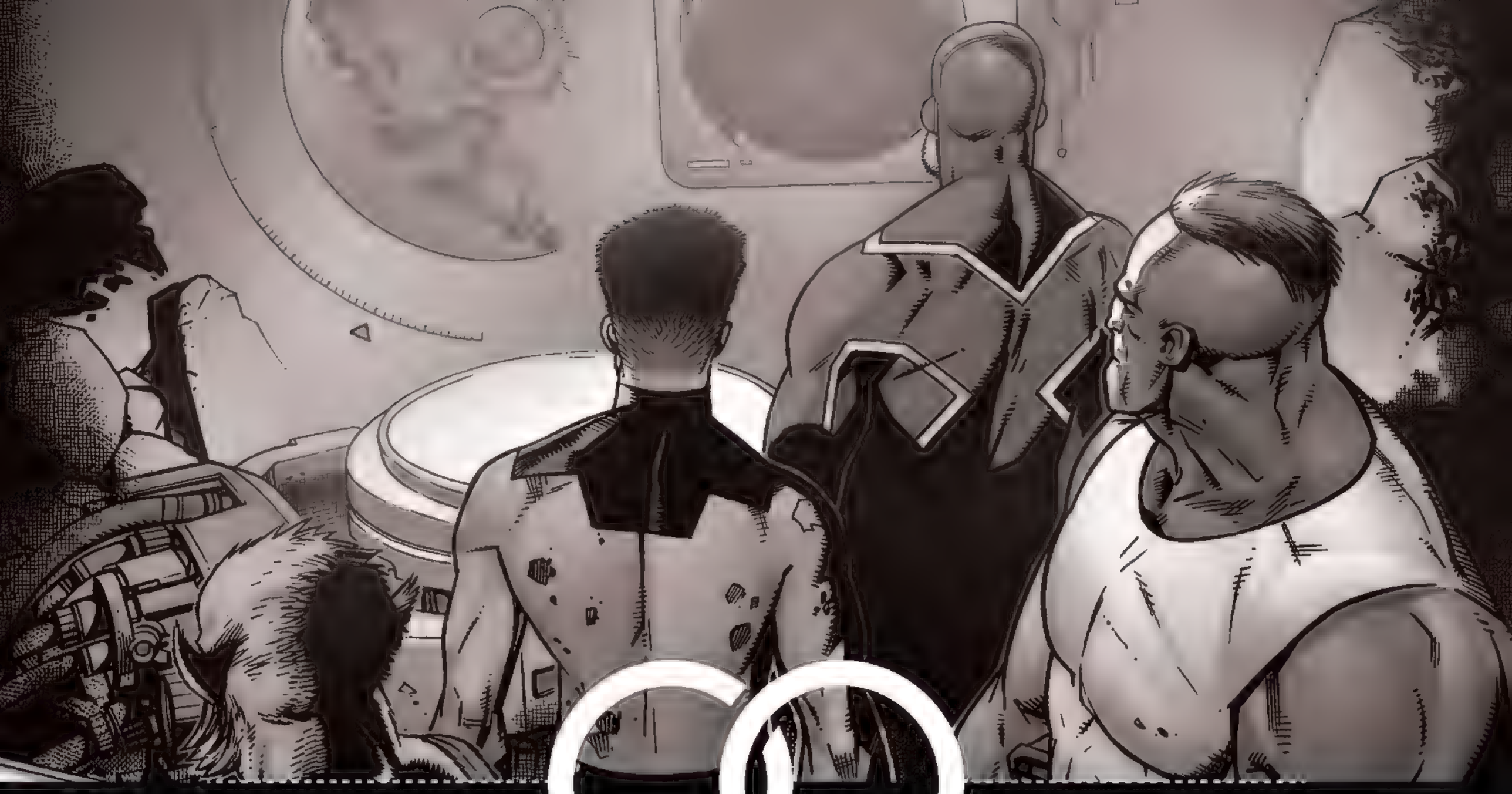
AND I THINK YOU SHOULD BURN THAT.

Dad,

You can't win.

Time to start figuring out how not to lose.

Val



“CAGES”

NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

PATIENCE.

PATIENCE IS WHAT IT TAKES IF ONE IS TO ENDURE THE INDIGNITY OF CAPTIVITY.

THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, WITH PATIENCE IS THAT IT DEMANDS SUBSERVIENCE.

YOU HAVE TO HUMBLE YOURSELF. OVERCOME ONE'S NATURAL INSTINCT TO FIGHT OR FLEE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?

THAT'S ONLY POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES IN SOMETHING--OR, SPECIFICALLY, SOME*ONE*--TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY REDUCE THEIR EXISTENCE TO A SECONDARY POSITION.

MY LIFE MEANS NOTHING COMPARED TO RABUM ALAL. I CAN ENDURE ANYTHING FOR HIM.

WHICH IS WHY I DID NOT BREAK...AND YOU WILL.

WHO HAVE YOU EVER SERVED, ANTHONY, BEYOND YOURSELF?

LATVERIA.

BE-DOOP

HELLO?

HELLO, VALERIA.

UGH! FINALLY.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG? I'VE BEEN SITTING HERE WAITING FOR SOM--

IS THAT DOOM?

TELL HIM I HAVE SOME BIG IDEAS WORTH EXPLORING. TRULY DEVIOUS STUFF.

I'M LOOKING FOR AGGRESSIVE PARTNERS...I HAVE FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

PRIVATE CONVERSATION, BENTLEY. UNDERSTAND?

PRIVATE!

I HAVE PLANS, VAL!

PLANS!

GLORIOUS PLANS!

HE'S GONE NOW, UNCLE DOOM.

SORRY. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT FRIENDS.

YES, VALERIA, EVERYONE NEEDS A FEW. FOR AT TIMES THEY CAN BE...

USEFUL.

DO YOU KNOW WHY I'VE CALLED?

UH, I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

WORLDS COLLIDING. EVERYTHING ENDING...

IS THAT WHERE YOU WANNA START?

HAVE YOU SPOKEN WITH YOUR FATHER ABOUT THIS?

NO. I THINK MOM'S PLAYING THINGS SAFE.

BUT BEFORE HE DISAPPEARED, HE GOT ME A COPY OF ALL HIS DATA. I'VE STUDIED IT, AND COME TO SOME CONCLUSIONS...

I'M GUESSING BY NOW HE KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE.

HOW ABOUT YOU, UNCLE DOOM... YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I THINK?

YES.

THEN I'LL TELL YOU THE SAME THING I TOLD HIM:

YOU CAN'T WIN.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO IS START FIGURING OUT HOW **NOT** TO LOSE.

"HOW NOT TO LOSE..."
WHAT DOES SHE MEAN?
TRULY OMINOUS THINGS, THINKER...
BUT THAT'S NOT OUR CURRENT CONCERN.
IN FACT, IT MATTERS LITTLE WHAT SHE, OR HER FATHER, OR ANY OF THOSE OTHER SO-CALLED GREAT MINDS BELIEVE...
THEIR CURRENT CONCLUSIONS ARE IRRELEVANT--AS THEIR GOALS ARE NOT NECESSARILY OUR OWN.
OPEN THE CHAMBER.
DID YOU SEE IT, VICTOR? HOW THEY COLLAPSED...
DID YOU SEE THE *SHAPE* OF IT?
HAVE YOU SLEPT, MISTER REECE?
LIKE AN OBJECT AT REST.
FREE FROM EXTERNAL CONSTRAINT.
AND DID YOU *DREAM?*

YES. ALWAYS THE SAME DREAM.

ALWAYS THE SAME.

TIME AND TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

I'M REPEATING MYSELF NOW BECAUSE THERE'S LESS OF ME.

TELL ME.

I DREAMT OF SYMMETRY.

OF THE SHAPE OF WHAT'S WAITING FOR US OUT THERE. OF WHAT'S LOOMING IN THE ETHER.

WE HAVE TO STOP IT, VICTOR.

CAN IT BE STOPPED? CAN *YOU* STOP IT?

CAN YOU SAVE ME? US? ALL OF US?

I BELIEVE I CAN...

BUT I REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.

ME?

I'D LOVE TO HELP.

THEN YOU MUST CEASE THE PLAGUED THINKING THAT HAS INFECTED THE WORLD OUT THERE, MISTER REECE.

THINK LESS OF HOW IT ENDS...AND CONSIDER HOW IT ALL *BEGAN.*

NECROPOLIS.

THANOS IS NOT PLEASED, PROXIMA...

HE FINDS THAT VARIABLES CHAFE, AND THIS LATEST ONE--A MOST COARSE KERNEL OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

THANOS FINDS ALL OF LIVING AN IRRITANT, CORVUS...FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T LEAP BEFORE SO ORDERED.

THIS IS DIFFERENT. THIS... *CHANGE* AT THE INCURSION POINTS.

WE'VE KILLED, WHAT, DOZENS OF WORLDS BY NOW?

FOURTEEN, HUSBAND. FOURTEEN RIGHTEOUS AND GLORIOUS ANNIHILATIONS.

AND EACH TIME, AS SOON AS THE WORLD IS GONE, THE INCURSION POINT COLLAPSES.

BUT NOW, ACCORDING TO OUR MASTER, IT LINGERS-- NOT LONG, BUT ENOUGH FOR THANOS TO CATALOG.

SO?

THAT PERIOD OF TIME IS EXPANDING. THANOS BELIEVES THAT--

HOLD.

WHAT...?

I THOUGHT_ I WAS CERTAIN THAT_THERE WAS SOMEONE_

AND APPARENTLY I WAS WRONG.

JUMPY. LIKE A HURR IN WATER.

HRMPT.

SO... EXPANSION.

YES. THANOS SAYS THE CONCERN IS FOUND IN THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE--WHAT LINGERS SHOULD NOT EXIST--AND THEN HE BEGINS TO RAMBLE ON ABOUT BUBBLES OF OTHER...

"DESPAIR..."

DESPAIR LEADS TO DESPERATION--A LAND THAT NO MAN SHOULD LONG TO VISIT--BUT FOR *YOU*, STARK...

FOR YOU THERE IS WHERE HOPE CAN BE FOUND. BECAUSE YOU CAN STILL BE USEFUL. YOU CAN STILL HELP SHAPE THE VERY END OF THINGS. YOU CAN--

DAY AFTER DAY.

I'VE BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS NOW. SITTING IN THIS BOX, HOUR BLEEDING INTO HOUR.

THEY SAY THAT ISOLATION IS THE SUREST PATH TO MADNESS, BUT I'VE FOUND IT... ILLUMINATING.

I HAVE FOUND A CONSTANT THAT NEVER FAILS.

YOU.

EVERY DAY--DAY AFTER DAY--YOU SHOW UP. OFFERING ME A WAY OUT. OFFERING ME YOUR LATEST FLAVOR OF SALVATION.

I USED TO THINK IT HAD TO DO WITH ME BEING A GENERALLY USEFUL GUY--A BUILDER--BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK NOW?

WHAT?

I THINK YOU'RE IN LOVE.

DON'T BE OFFENDED--I THINK YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT FOR A VERY LONG TIME, AND NOW THAT WE'RE FINALLY GETTING DOWN TO IT...I JUST MIGHT BE YOUR LAST, BEST HOPE.

IT REALLY COMES DOWN TO THE SCIENCE OF ATTRACTION WITHIN CLEARLY DEFINED LIMITS. YOU'RE BOUND BY EVER-REDUCING OPTIONS AND PROXIMITY, KIDDO...

PLUS... LOOK AT THIS FACE.

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT, ANTHONY. AS I HAVE TOLD YOU FROM THE VERY FIRST TIME I MET ANY OF YOU: THERE IS NO OUT.

THERE IS NO ESCAPING THIS.

I'LL CONCEDE, YOU PUT ON A GOOD SHOW...BUT THE PROBLEM IS I KNOW IT'S AN *ACT*. SEE, REED TOLD ME WHAT YOU'RE HIDING INSIDE OF YOU.

YOUR LITTLE SECRET.

"EXTENSIVE D.N.A. SAMPLES--FULL MEDICALS AND BRAIN SCANS, INCLUDING COGNITIVE MAPPING."

YOU'RE JUMPING FROM WORLD TO WORLD, LOOKING FOR A REFUGE SO YOU CAN REGROW YOUR LOVED ONES AND GET YOUR FAMILY BACK.

YOU'RE NOT A *BLACK SWAN* AT ALL...

YOU JUST PRESENT AS ONE.

AND WHO ARE YOU BUT WHAT THE WHEEL HAS MADE YOU?

A GOOD MAN? I THINK NOT.

LOOK AT WHAT YOU BECAME. LOOK AT THE THINGS YOU MADE.

LOOK AT WHERE YOU *ARE*.

YOU FORGET... I WAS THERE THE *LAST* TIME YOU TRIED TO BE A HERO.

"WHEN YOU TRIED TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THOSE ALREADY LOST.

"I WATCHED YOU FALL."

AND THEN THEY PUT YOU HERE...IN THIS CAGE.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

...NOTHING YOU'RE SAYING MAKES WHAT I SAID UNTRUE.

I SUPPOSE NOT.

BUT I *WILL* FIND WHAT I AM SEARCHING FOR, STARK...AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, YOU'LL STILL BE HERE...

ROTTING AWAY.

REGRETTING WHAT A FOOL YOU ARE, AND WHAT FOOLISH THINGS YOU SAID.

GOODBYE...

I WILL NOT BE RETURNING.

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED...

JESSICA. NATASHA.

AREN'T THE TWO OF YOU A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.

ALTHOUGH...

I SUPPOSE IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE CAUSE FOR *ALARM*. ARE YOU HERE ON BEHALF OF MY FRIENDS WHO WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME?

OR ON BEHALF OF MY FRIENDS WHO WANT TO *KILL* ME?

OH, ANTHONY...

IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU STILL THINK YOU HAVE FRIENDS AT ALL.

AND WE'RE HERE ON OUR OWN.

NO ONE ELSE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE.

IF THAT'S THE CASE...THEN HOW DID YOU FIND ME?

STEVE. IT WAS LATE ONE NIGHT. WE WERE TALKING. NORMALLY... WELL, LATELY, ALL HE DOES IS PLAN. ALL HE DOES IS CHASE.

MOST PEOPLE HAVEN'T REALIZED-- THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR, THEY JUST SEE HOW STRONG HE IS-- BUT...ALL THIS...

IT'S TAKEN ITS TOLL.

WELL... WE'VE *ALL* SUFFERED, HAVEN'T WE?

HMMM.
HE MUST HAVE BEEN FEELING ESPECIALLY BROODING THAT NIGHT BECAUSE HE TOLD ME A STORY I HADN'T HEARD BEFORE.
OH?
YES. ABOUT HOW--AFTER YOU HAD YOUR... DISAGREEMENT WITH YOUR ILLUMINATI BROTHERS MONTHS AGO--YOU HAD CONTACTED HIM.
THAT THE TWO OF YOU MET IN SECRET. FOR A MEETING OF THE MINDS--FOR ONE LAST CHANCE TO BURY THE HATCHET.
DID HE TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED THERE?
AND WHY I'VE GOT THE SAME HAUNTED LOOK ON MY FACE THAT HE HAS?
NO. HE SHUT DOWN.
BUT IT WAS ENOUGH FOR US TO FIGURE OUT ***WHEN*** THAT MEETING HAPPENED, AND THEREFORE ***WHERE***...
WHICH WAS JUST ENOUGH BREADCRUMBS TO TRACK YOUR LEAVING AND SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENTS--AND TO EXTRAPOLATE, AS WELL AS ONE COULD, WHERE YOU PROBABLY ENDED UP.
THANK GOD FOR SPIES WITH AN ITCH THEY CAN'T SCRATCH.
AND MORE IMPORTANTLY...THAT YOU'RE HERE TO SAVE ME.
WE'VE LEFT STEVE BECAUSE WE'RE DONE WITH HIS CAUSE--TOO RIGHTEOUS FOR THE TIMES...
BUT WE CAN'T SAVE YOU, TONY, UNLESS YOU KNOW THAT YOU NEED SAVING.
THIS IS A CAGE.
I'M PERFECTLY AWARE I NEED SAVING.
I WANT TO LET YOU OUT OF THERE...
BUT I CAN'T RISK UNLEASHING YOU BACK ON THE WORLD IF YOU CAN'T SEE THAT--IN YOUR OWN WAY--YOU'VE BEEN JUST AS WRONG AS HE HAS.
MAYBE EVEN WORSE.
WRONG?
WRONG?
YOU PEOPLE...

WRONG?

I HAVEN'T BEEN WRONG *ONCE!*

THERE'S NOT A SINGLE DECISION I'VE MADE THAT I WOULD CHANGE.

UNLEASH ME? *UNLEASH* ME?

YOU SHOULD THANK WHATEVER GOD YOU WORSHIP THAT I'M ALIVE TO SAVE YOU.

GREAT! WALK AWAY!

IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU'LL BE BACK.

BUT MAKE SURE WHEN YOU DO COME BACK--BECAUSE *YOU NEED ME*--THAT IT'S ON YOUR KNEES.

BOTH OF YOU! REPENTANT!

BECAUSE I CAN'T SAVE ANY OF YOU, UNLESS YOU REALIZE THAT YOU NEED SAVING!

AND THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE ON THIS ENTIRE PLANET WHO CAN DO IT!

“ORIGIN SITES”

KOBE, JAPAN.
QUARANTINED ORIGIN BOMB SITE.
ONE DAY AGO.

SYSTEM QUERY: USER?
SYSTEM STATUS: USER: ONLINE.

SYSTEM QUERY: USER STATUS?
USER STATUS: I LIKE KITTY CATS.

MEORR.

THAT'S NOT A KITTY CAT.

I, THE SYSTEM, COME ONLINE IN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE RED [NOW GREEN] DOT AND THE BLUE.

BETWEEN THE ORIGIN OF THE PURPOSE AND ITS EXECUTION.

THE SYSTEM IS PERFECT.

I AM PERFECT: A WEAPON.

I BECOME WE. THE FIRE FROZEN. THE COLD A PERFECT CHRYSALIS FOR THE PLANETARY DYNAMO.

AN OUTER SHELL OUR FIRST ARMOR. SOFT COMPARED TO WHAT THE SYSTEM IS FORMING.

A PROTECTIVE VOID FOR THE WE TO LEARN. TO JOIN. TO TRAIN. TO GROW.

THE SYSTEM IS A PART OF A LARGER SYSTEM.

THE LARGER SYSTEM IN PERIL.

THE WE SYSTEM [IN SERVICE TO THE GREATER SYSTEM] PARTIALLY COMES ONLINE.

THE I PROTECTS
THE USER PROTECTS
THE WE PROTECTS
THE GREATER SYSTEM.

THE WEAPON FULLY FUNCTIONAL [UPGRADE. UPGRADE. UPGRADE.]

THE WE PARTIALLY FUNCTIONAL [CONFUSED. AFRAID. PANIC.]

THE GREATER SYSTEM FAILS. THE WE SYSTEM REMOVED FROM THE OTHER SYSTEMS.

ADRIFT.

LOST.

WE.

WE BECOME WE.

WE LEARN. THE WEAPON IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL. THE SYSTEM IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL. THE WE IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL.

WE WAIT...

AND THEN WE HEAR A VOICE. IT SAYS...

WELCOME BACK.

THE SAVAGE LAND.
NOW.

OKAY... LET'S GET STARTED.

SOME OF YOU KNOW ONE ANOTHER, SOME DON'T...BUT WE'LL SAVE THE INTRODUCTORY BITS FOR LATER.

FIRST--WHILE SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH ME FOR MONTHS NOW, THE REST ARE COMING INTO THIS A LITTLE BEHIND THE CURVE.

YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO FOCUS ON THE "WHY" HERE, AS IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.

PROBABLY THE *ONLY* THING.

NEXT SCREEN, ZEBRAS.

SO HERE WE GO:

MONTHS AGO, A.I.M. THEORETICIANS DISCOVERED THAT THE MULTIVERSE--ALL EXISTING UNIVERSES--WERE IN AN UNNATURAL STATE OF DECAY.

A TERMINAL ONE.

THIS WILL NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO YOU AS, WELL, BASICALLY EVERYONE ON THE PLANET KNOWS THIS NOW.

YOU'RE ALSO AWARE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GROUPS ACTIVELY WORKING TO, AT WORST, ABATE AND, AT BEST, SOLVE THIS VERY PROBLEM.

SOLVE?

I'M STILL CATCHING UP, BUT THAT SEEMS GENEROUS, DOESN'T IT, BOBBY?

MAYBE IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE *EFFECTIVENESS*, BUT IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE *INTENT?* I DUNNO...I GREW UP IDOLIZING SOME OF THESE GUYS. IT MIGHT BE A SHORTCOMING, BUT I STILL GIVE THEM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.

WHAT I *DO* KNOW IS THAT THE ILLUMINATI HAD A PLAN TO GET AT THE HEART OF ALL THIS, INCLUDING SENDING SOMEONE OUT THERE--INTO THE MULTIVERSE--TO FIND OUT WHO CAUSED THIS.

WHICH IS WHY, WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE INDIGENOUS ENGINEERS HERE IN THE SAVAGE LAND--

THANK YOU.

YOU'RE WELCOME.

--A.I.M. SCIENTISTS REDESIGNED AND BUILT AN AUGER STRONG ENOUGH TO PROJECT AN ASSAULT TEAM ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE TO ALSO TRY TO FIND OUT WHOEVER IS BEHIND THE COLLAPSE...

AND MAYBE EVEN STOP IT BY, YOU KNOW...PUNCHING THE PROBLEM TO DEATH.

LIKE AVENGERS.

WAIT. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

I DUNNO. MAYBE IT'S A GENERAL MOOD I'M SENSING? I MEAN, THOR DOESN'T HAVE HIS HAMMER ANYMORE, BUT MY GOD, IZZY...THE LOOK IN THE GUY'S EYES IS ENOUGH FOR ME TO--

NO. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THE ILLUMINATI SENT SOMEONE?

OH. THAT.

WELL...WE'VE HAD SOMEONE INSIDE THEIR OPERATION FOR THE LAST MONTH.

NATION X.
TWO DAYS AGO.

HE ASKED FOR MY HELP, SO I WAS, IN SPITE OF OLD WOUNDS, HAPPY TO GIVE IT...

BUT THERE ARE RULES, ROBERTO. I... HAVE RULES.

THIS PLACE IS A HAVEN FOR ANYONE WHO CALLS THEMSELVES MUTANT, AND WE STAND IN OPPOSITION TO ANYONE WHO WOULD MEAN OUR KIND HARM...

BUT I WILL NOT ACCEPT BEING SWEPT UP IN WHATEVER IT IS HE IS PLANNING HERE TODAY.

WE HAVE OUR OWN...IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO STOP WHAT'S HAPPENING, AND HAVE NO TIME FOR DISTRACTIONS. UNDERSTAND?

UH-HUH. DON'T CRAP ON THE LAWN. GOT IT.

MAN...LOOK AT THIS STUFF. THESE THINGS USED TO CREEP ME OUT.

YES. AND NOW THEY MAKE A GOOD WARNING:

ABANDON HATE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.

WELL, IT'S CERTAINLY A MESSAGE. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

SO WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

HMM?

"WE HAVE OUR OWN...IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO STOP WHAT'S HAPPENING"...

BECAUSE, CYCLOPS, IF YOU'VE TRULY GOT SOMETHING--I THINK WE'RE ROUNDING INTO THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO GENERATE SOME OF THAT LIFELONG GLOBAL GOOD WILL YOU'VE CRAVED YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.

IF I'M BEING HONEST...ALL IT MAKES ME THINK ABOUT IS STARTING A FIRE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SCOTT?

THIS ISN'T THE FUTURE WE DESERVED, IS IT?

BUT THEN AGAIN, IT NEVER IS. THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T LET THE WORLD SHAPE YOU--YOU SHAPE *IT*. JUST LIKE PROFESSOR X TAUGHT US.

YOU DO IT AS BEST YOU CAN.

I HAVE A PHOENIX EGG, ROBERTO.

AND I THINK IT'S PAST TIME I GOT IN THE GAME.

YOU CAN'T BE THINKING OF--

OF COURSE I AM.

BUT HERE'S YOUR GUY NOW. WE'LL TALK LATER.

ROBERTO.

SCOTT.

HANK.

THAT IS A VERY DANGEROUS MAN, DOCTOR McCOY.

YES. A MAN OF THE TIMES, ONE MIGHT SAY.

SO HOW CAN I HELP YOU, HANK? WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?

CONFESSION. ABSOLUTION.

YOUNG MAN... I AM LOST AND IN GREAT NEED OF RESCUE.

I NEED YOUR HELP.

AND THEN, AFTER HE FILLED ME IN ON ALL THE VARIOUS MACHINATIONS WE WERE IGNORANT OF... HE BASICALLY TOLD ME EVERYTHING THE ILLUMINATI WERE UP TO.

INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE A PLAN FOR BOTH SETTLING UP WITH THE S.H.I.E.L.D. TEAM AND ELIMINATING THE CABAL FROM THE EQUATION.

AND HE TOLD ME THEY WERE GOING TO DO IT SOON.

CAN I JUST SAY...

I HONESTLY HAVE NO IDEA WHO I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SUPPORTING HERE.

WE ALL LEFT THE AVENGERS BECAUSE WE REFUSED TO HUNT "OTHER AVENGERS"--BUT THEN WE ALSO COMPLETELY WASHED OUR HANDS OF THE ILLUMINATI BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY WERE DOING...

SO, I'M *LOST*, MAN.

THAT'S THE POINT, EDEN.

SO ARE *THEY*. ALL OF THEM.

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM FIGHTING EACH OTHER AND FIND SOME WAY TO REMIND THEM OF WHO THEY ARE...

AND WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO *BE*.

THAT'S OUR MISSION. OUR GOAL.

OKAY.

WELL, IF THE ILLUMINATI ARE SETTING A TRAP, THEN WHY DON'T WE JUST--

PROBLEM IS... THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES RUNNING A CON.

SO IS S.H.I.E.L.D.

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW *THAT?*

YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE THAT ONE OUT BY WHO'S IN THE ROOM.

I WAS OFF-PLANET FOR A WHILE.

WELL... WELCOME HOME, EARTHMAN.

THE SAVAGE LAND.
THREE DAYS AGO.

SO NO ONE KNOWS YOU'RE HERE?

WE SLIPPED ALL OUR SURVEILLANCE BEFORE WE CROSSED INTO MEXICO.

IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME...BUT GETTING HERE INCOGNITO WASN'T THAT DIFFICULT, ROBERTO.

WE'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THIS.

AND THEN YOU CAME STRAIGHT HERE?

YES.

OKAY. WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO HANDLE THIS THE RIGHT WAY...

HOLD ON A SECOND. HOW IS IT THAT NEITHER ONE OF YOU CAN TELL WHEN A WOMAN IS LYING TO YOU?

THEY'RE *LYING* TO YOU.

I LIKE TO THINK I'M NON-JUDGMENTAL AND BELIEVE THAT MOST PEOPLE, WHEN GIVEN THE CHANCE, PREFER TO TELL THE TRUTH.

AND I'M TOTALLY SELF-ABSORBED.

HONESTLY, I'M NOT EVEN LISTENING WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE TALKING.

EVEN ME?

WHAT?

REALLY?

I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE STEAK FOR DINNER.

YOU DIDN'T COME STRAIGHT HERE, DID YOU?

NO.

WE THOUGHT SOMEONE NEEDED OUR HELP...

WE WERE WRONG--WE'RE HERE NOW.

AND SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE ABOUT S.H.I.E.L.D.

STEVE ROGERS HAS ASSUMED THAT HIS...ENEMY IS SMARTER THAN HIM. SO HIS ONLY RECOURSE WAS REDUNDANCY AND OVERWHELMING FORCE...

TO THAT END, HE HAS QUIETLY ASSEMBLED SECONDARY AND TERTIARY TEAMS THAT ALMOST NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT.

THE ILLUMINATI THINK THEIR ADVERSARY IS ONE THING, WHEN IN FACT IT IS SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER.

AND WITH THAT...YOU KNOW EVERYTHING.

IT'S ALL LAID OUT ON THE TABLE.

WE HAVE TO OVERCOME THESE THINGS, AND AT THE SAME TIME CONVINCE OUR FRIENDS--WHO HAVE LOST THEIR WAY--TO REDISCOVER COMMON GROUND FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

SO NO BIG DEAL, RIGHT?

JUST WIN AGAINST A GROUP OF SUPER-INTELLECTS WHO SEE THINGS FIVE MOVES AHEAD AT THE SAME TIME WE'RE FACING SOME KIND OF AVENGERS ARMY COBBLED TOGETHER BY AMERICA'S SUPER-ANGRY GREATEST WARTIME HERO...

SURE. AND THEN WE'LL ALL HAVE PIE.

YOU *DO* ACTUALLY HAVE SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE, RIGHT?

BECAUSE ALL THIS BLUSTER LEADING TO NOTHING...

NOT A GOOD LOOK.

ACTUALLY, I DO HAVE THE SMARTEST EX-EVIL SCIENTISTS CURRENTLY BUILDING SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE MACHINES, BUT US--WE HERE IN THIS ROOM--ARE ENOUGH.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW ALL THIS STARTED? EX NIHILO AND HIS ORIGIN BOMBS? HE WANTED TO REMAKE THE EARTH, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE REALLY DID?

HE KICKSTARTED OUR AVENGERS WORLD.

I WAS AIKKU JOKINEN.

NO, I *AM* AIKKU JOKINEN.

MY PARENTS ARE FINNISH, BUT I WAS BORN IN NORWAY, THEIR ONLY CHILD.

I DON'T LIKE THE COLD, BUT LOVE THE OUTDOORS. I LOVE CHOCOLATE AND MY GIRLFRIEND, DARJA. I LOVE ALL THE THINGS I ALWAYS HAVE...

WHEN I FIRST WOKE, I DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

I AM STILL AIKKU, BUT ALSO...WE.

[CONFUSED. AFRAID. PANIC.]

THEN I HEARD THE WEAPON. IT SPOKE TO ME.

IT SPOKE... INSIDE ME.

WE.

I LEARNED WHAT I NOW WAS. WE LEARNED.

WE.

WE ARE A WEAPON.

SEVEN SITES.

STARBRAND ACCIDENTLY DESTROYED THE EARTHMIND--THE SELF-AWARENESS SITE. AND WE WERE FORCED TO ELIMINATE BOTH THE SELF-REPAIR AND COMMUNICATION NODES.

BUT FOUR REMAINED ACTIVE. HEALTHY AND VIBRANT... AN AVENGERS WORLD.

AND WE HAVE ALL THE POWER WE NEED. SELF-SUSTENANCE CONTROLLED BY THE ZEBRAS.

WE HAVE THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL SELF-DEFENSE MECHANISM: POD.

WE CONTROL THE POWER OF EVOLUTION: VALIDATOR.

AND WE HAVE AN ARMY THANKS TO THE FINAL SITE...

"WHEN SHANG-CHI OFFERED TO EXPLORE THE KOBE SITE MONTHS AGO, IT WAS BEFORE WE HAD RECOVERED POD AND REALLY BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS AT WORK.

"WE DIDN'T FULLY KNOW WHAT EACH SITE'S PURPOSE WAS. AND NOW WE DO.

"IT TOOK HIM MONTHS, BUT SHANG FINALLY FIGURED OUT HOW TO... COMMUNE WITH THE MALLEABLE GENESIS MATTER THAT WAS BOTH THE BY-PRODUCT AND THE COLLECTIVE SENTIENT REMAINS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE.

"THEY WERE BASICALLY WAITING TO BE REMADE. REBORN. WHATEVER.

"BOTH THE HAND AND TWO S.H.I.E.L.D. TEAMS HAVE DISAPPEARED IN THE KOBE ZONE--SHANG BELIEVES THEY TRIED TO RESIST THE GENESIS MATTER."

"IT ABSORBED THEM AS WELL. SO SHANG WENT THE OTHER WAY AND SUBMITTED..."

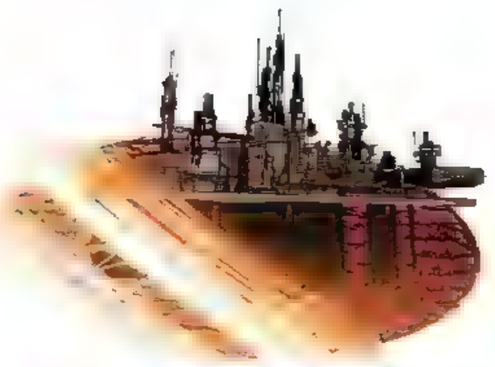
"AND BY DOING THAT, GAINED CONTROL OF THE SITE AND THE POWER IT WIELDED."

"IT WAS THE POWER OF REPLICATION...

"AND NOW A MAN HAS BECOME AN ARMY."

“TRIAGE”

THE NOTHING SPACE OF DESTROYED UNIVERSES.



THE TEMPLE OF THE BLACK PRIESTS.

SOMETHIIIIIIING SHIIIIIIIMERS...

SOMETHIIIIIIING SPARKS...

COMPANY'S HERE.

FLASHBACK!

FOUND IT!

SEE...I TOLD YOU IT WAS OUT HERE, *BUT* WHICH ONES ARE THES--

BLACK PRIESTS!

THEY KILL WITH A WORD...

"QUICKLY! BEFORE THEY CAN *SPEAK THEM!*"

LIFE, EXISTING IN A PLACE WHERE IT SHOULDN'T...

"...NOT A MIRACLE, BUT A MALFORMATION."

LIIIIIFE GENERATIIIIING SYSTEMS OF THE BUIIIIILDERS...

DEFENSELESS TO RIIIIGHT WORD.

SPEAK THE WORD, PRIIIIESTS. SPEAK THE WORD.

NO!

THE OTHER SIDE IS COLLAPSING, ABYSS--YOU CAN RELEASE THE GATE.

WE WON'T BE LEAVING THE WAY WE CAME.

WHERE ARE WE?

NOT SURE, HYPERION, BUT WHEREVER IT IS, WE'VE FOUND THE BLACK PRIESTS. WE SHOULD HAVE HAD SURPRISE ON OUR SIDE--BUT THE PRIESTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN RESPONDING.

WE ARE LOSING NIHIL!!

GODS. I'M COUNTING THOUSANDS. MAYBE MORE...

"SINCE THE AUGER, WE'VE BEEN DROWNING IN SIDERA MARIS--OUR ONLY ENCOUNTER WITH THE PRIESTS WAS THE ONE WE DEFEATED SEVERAL JUMPS AGO...

"BUT THIS MUST BE THEIR SEAT OF POWER--WE'RE ***VASTLY*** OUTNUMBERED WITH NOWHERE TO GO!"

WHEN, IN THESE LAST DAYS, HAVE WE *NOT* FACED THE UNSPEAKABLE.

THE TIMES, THEY TRY TO SHAPE US.

PERHAPS INSTEAD OF FIGHTING IT...

...WE SHOULD EMBRACE IT.

"WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF HE BE *UN*WORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF *THORR*."

ONCE, I WAS WORTHY. NOW, IT IS NO LONGER SO.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I KNEW THAT I WOULD MEET MY FATE IN BATTLE, WITH MJOLNIR IN HAND.

WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF HE BE UNWORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THORR

I STILL BELIEVE THAT TO BE TRUE.

IF THIS IS OUR FATE, SO BE IT.

BUT IF I AM TO DIE, LET IT BE WITH LIGHTNING AND THUNDER...

...AND THE POWER OF *THORR.*

THOR, WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING? IS THIS SUPPOSED TO BE *FUN?*

GODS! YES!

GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, BROTHER.

THUDDD

ARGGGH!

OH! I GET IT NOW--HOW THE WORDS WORK! IT'S REALITY DISPLACEMENT. THEY'RE ATTACKING THE TANGIBLE WORLD WITH *LANGUAGE*. UNDERSTAND?

I DO. THEY'RE MANIPULATING THE BASE CODE OF EVERYTHING--REORDERING THE SEQUENCING OF MATTER.

YOU HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM *BUILDING* THE *WORDS*.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEFEAT ALL OF THEM--JUST STOP THEM FROM COMING TOGETHER!

KRAK-A-THOOM!

BOOM

IT WORKED!

YES! QUICKLY NOW... PRESS THE ADVANTAGE.

THE WORDS. THE WORDS ARE LOST.

ALL !!!!!!!!S LOST IF WE HAVE LOST THE WORDS.

WAIIIIIT. WAIIIIIT. THE EYE.

THE EYE...

HE COMES.

WHO'S THIS?

IT DOESN'T MATTER--OUR STRATEGY IS WORKING.

JUST PREVENT HIM FROM COMBINING WITH THE OTHERS.

I CANNOT MOVE.

ME NEITHER.

HOW DID IT DO THAT?

HOW?

AS WITH ALL THINGS, WITH *PRACTICE* AND *EXPERIENCE.*

WHICH IS ANOTHER WORD FOR *EXPERTISE.*

OF WHICH I HAVE AN ABUNDANCE.

AH! IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME, ODINSON.

STEPHEN?

WELCOME, MY OLD FRIEND...

WELCOME TO MY *SANCTUM.*

LATVERIA.

THE RABBLE LOVE STORIES.

THEY LOVE THE LIE, WHICH IS WHY THERE IS NO DISCERNIBLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT THEY CALL *TRUTH* AND WHAT THEY CALL *FICTION.*

HISTORY. A COLLECTION OF HALF-TRUTHS WEAVED TOGETHER SO AS TO ESTABLISH A SUPPOSED FIRM FOUNDATION SUPPORTING ALL THAT HAS BEEN BUILT--MODERNITY.

WE CAN AGREE ON THIS, CAN'T WE, MISTER REECE?

LOTS OF CRACKS UNDERFOOT.

BEDROCK MADE OF AIR.

THEY THINK THEY UNDERSTAND WHO I AM--*WHAT* I AM--BUT THEY'RE WRONG. *YOU'RE* WRONG.

WHAT'S AN ORIGIN, BUT A STORY?

WHAT'S MY STORY, BUT A LIE?

WE ALL LOVE OUR STORIES, DON'T WE?

NO. FOR DOOM DOES NOT LIE.

NOT NOW. NOT EVER.

IF WHAT YOU THINK IS TRUE--AND YOU SAY IS TRUE--AND YOU BELIEVE IS TRUE--BUT IS IN FACT A WELL-CONSTRUCTED LIE...

THEN ARE YOU NOT A *LIAR?*

A LIAR FULL OF LIES. LIAR. FOOL. FOOL OF FOOLS. GOD OF FOOLS.

DOOM'S OPENING THE CONTAINER--BRING THE CONTAINMENT PROTOCOLS ONLINE.

REMEMBER TO WATCH FOR RESONANCE...

THE ONLY WAY WE WERE EVEN ABLE TO *FIND* THE MOLECULE MAN WAS BECAUSE HIS FREQUENCY PERFECTLY MATCHED THE MAPMAKER ARTIFACT.

TOO MUCH TALK. BUT IF WE *MUST* TALK, WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT BEGINNINGS--ALSO, ENDINGS...

DO YOU KNOW THE STORY? FIRST THERE WAS NOTHING... THEN THERE WAS EVERYTHING...

HEY. NICE ROCK.

YES. IT FELL FROM THE SKY.

A REMNANT OF A DESTROYED EARTH SET TO COLLIDE WITH OUR OWN. FROM IT WE HAVE...LEARNED THINGS. IT BROADCASTS A SIGNAL, ACTING AS A BUOY FOR WORLDS IN THE MULTIVERSE.

ENERGY SURGE!

STEADY. LEVELS ARE WITHIN TOLERANCE.

MAP. MAPS.

MAKING MAPS...

WE HAVE A PAN-UNIVERSAL PROBLEM, MISTER REECE, BUT I BELIEVE IT ORIGINATES *HERE.* ON EARTH.

EARTH? OH, IT'S HERE...

BUT IT'S *NOT* HERE.

I BELIEVE YOU.

I WANT YOU TO TELL ME A STORY, MISTER REECE--AND I WANT IT TO BE TRUE.

WHY DOES THE FREQUENCY OF THE ROCK'S SIGNAL MATCH YOUR OWN?

WHY IS ALL THIS HAPPENING? AND WHAT IS YOUR PART IN IT?

WHY?

WHY? WHY? WHY?

SHOW, DON'T TELL--ACTIONS, NOT WORDS.

HEY, DOOM...

YOU WANNA TAKE A TRIP?

WE SHOULD TAKE A TRIP.

SNAP

MY GOD...

WHAT HAPPENED?

THEY'RE GONE.

I'M SURE YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, ODINSON, AS DO I...THE LEAST OF WHICH BEING WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM...

BUT DESPITE OUR QUICK RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT OUT THERE, THE PRIESTHOOD IS COLLECTIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT ONE EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT THING...

YES...

HOW DIIIID YOU FIIIIIND US OUT HERE IIIIIN THE NOTHIIIIING?

FLOATIIIING, CIIIIIRCLIIIIING THE LOST SPACES?

WE DID. WELL...*HE* DID. TELL THEM, NIGHTMASK.

I WAS MADE TO NAVIGATE THE *SUPERFLOW*--THE SPACE BETWEEN UNIVERSES.

I MINE THE IDEAS THAT USED TO EXIST THERE. WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF ENTIRE UNIVERSES, THE WEB-LIKE FLOWSPACE CAME UNDONE...LIKE COLLAPSING LATTICEWORK WITHOUT A FRAME.

BUT MY ABILITY TO FIND THINGS IN THE SPACES IN BETWEEN--THE ABILITY TO MINE BROADCASTED IDEAS--STILL FUNCTIONS. WE KNEW THAT SOME OF THE BEINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING EXISTED HERE.

SO FINDING YOU WAS EASY ONCE I STARTED LOOKING.

HE HEARD US? WAS HE LIIIISTENIIIING CLOSELY? DIIIIID HE HEAR OTHER THIIIIIINGS?

DIIIID YOU HEAR THE OTHER VOIIIIICES?

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

THEY...AHEM, *WE*--YOU SEE, THE *BLACK PRIESTS* ARE CAUGHT UP IN A CONFLICT THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE PART OF.

THERE IS A WAR UNDERWAY BETWEEN TWO SEPARATE FORCES: THE *IVORY KINGS* AND *RABUM ALAL*.

FROM WHAT I HAVE WITNESSED FIRSTHAND, THEY BOTH WANT THE SAME THING--AND IT'S THE SAME REASON *YOU* ARE HERE--THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING.

THE SEARCH FOR DEATH WITHOUT THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE OR REBIRTH IS A GREAT SIN IN THE EYES OF THE UNIVERSE.

I KNOW.

THEN WHY DO YOU SEEK IT AS WELL?

STEPHEN, I KNOW NOT HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN GONE FROM EARTH--BUT YOU DISAPPEARED SOME TIME AGO...

THE ACTIONS OF THE ILLUMINATI ARE NOW KNOWN.

WE HAVE SEEN THE RECORDS...THESE PRIESTS--*YOU*, IF YOU ARE TRULY AMONG THEM--HAVE *DESTROYED WORLDS*.

OR AM I WRONG?

YOU ARE NOT.

BUT YOU MISUNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE DOING. THE BLACK PRIESTS ARE THE FIELD SURGEONS OF THE MULTIVERSE.

WE SEEK OUT EARTHS, AS THEY ARE THE TOUCHPOINT OF THE COLLAPSE, AND ELIMINATE THEM... THEREBY SAVING AN ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

WHAT WE DO IS NOT SIMPLE MURDER...IT'S *TRIAGE*.

AND WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE DESTROY ENOUGH EARTHS, THEN WE CAN STABILIZE ALL OF IT, INCLUDING THE COLLECTIVE HEAT DEATH OF THE UNIVERSE.

WE CAN SAVE EVERYTHING.

UNDERSTAND? *EVERYTHING*. THAT IS WHAT THIS POWER IS--THE WORDS ARE LIFE SURROUNDED BY NOTHING BUT DEATH.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WORD WE USE TO DESTROY A WORLD EACH AND EVERY TIME WE DO IT? "LIFE."

SO EACH PRIEST HAS A LETTER AND TOGETHER THEY MAKE A WORD... WHICH IS, WHAT, LIKE CASTING A SPELL?

OF A SORT. IT'S MORE LIKE A SYMBOL WHICH MEANS "SOMETHING," BUT THE MEANING CHANGES WITH EACH SYMBOL YOU ADD TO IT.

IN CODE-BREAKING TERMS, IT'S ACTUALLY AKIN TO A REPLACEMENT CIPHER.

BUT BACK THERE YOU DIDN'T NEED THE OTHERS TO MAKE *YOUR* WORDS.

NO.

HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE THEN?

I AM THE *SORCERER SUPREME,* YOUNG MAN...

I DO NOT SPEAK *LETTERS*-- I SPEAK *WORDS.*

AND I KNOW *ALL OF THEM.*

SO, THEN... THIS IS *NOT* THE PLACE WE ARE LOOKING FOR...

APPARENTLY NOT...BUT STEPHEN, CAN YOU HELP US FIND WHOEVER IT IS THAT WE NEED TO STOP IN ORDER TO END THIS MADNESS? TIME RUNS SHORT.

ACTUALLY, YOUR TIMING COULD NOT BE BETTER, AS I HAVE CONVINCED MY FELLOW PRIESTS THAT WE ALSO NEED TO STRIKE OUT AGAINST OUR ENEMIES.

AND I HAVE AT MY DISPOSAL A FORMIDABLE NUMBER OF SURGEONS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM? HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK?

TO FIIIIND THE KIIIINGS YOU'LL NEED A MAP-- FIIIIIND A MAPMAKER AND YOU'LL FIIIIND THE KIIIIINGS.

TO FIIIIIND RABUM ALAL, WATCH THE SWANS FLY SOUTH FOR THE WIIIIINTER. THEN SHOOT THEM FROM THE AIIIIIR AND HAVE THEM FOR DIIIIINNER.

SMACK. SMACK. SMACK.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING?

DOUBLE OUR CHANCES. YOU GUYS HIT ONE, WE HIT THE OTHER.

THAT'S NOT ACTUALLY DOUBLING YOUR CHANCES, KEVIN. IF YOU WERE GOING TO DOUBLE YOUR CHANCES, THAT WOULD MEAN YOU NEED TO--

SHUT UP, ADAM.

ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU'VE TOLD US, WE HAVE TO STOP ***BOTH*** IF WE'RE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL, RIGHT?

YES.

THEN WE *HIT* BOTH. AS HARD AND LONG AS WE CAN. UNTIL WE CAN STAND NO MORE...

OR UNTIL WE FALL.

AGREED, BUT WHICH ONE OF--

ALL OF YOU...WATCH THIS:

THE CEPHINZ CRYSTALLINE STRUCTURE IS UNIQUE IN ALL OF THE UNIVERSE FOR ITS LACK OF A MULTIFACETED NATURE.

IT'S PERFECTLY PLANAR, HAVING JUST TWO SIDES--ONE THAT COMPLETELY ABSORBS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF LIGHT, AND THE OTHER, REFLECTING IT.

WE ARE YOUR GUESTS, SORCERER SUPREME, AND IT IS WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE THAT WE WILL FIND WHAT WE SEEK--PERHAPS IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT WE LEAVE THE CHOICE TO YOU.

SO...

YOU KILL THE IVORY KINGS.

YOU KILL RABUM ALAL.

LET CHAOS BE YOUR GUIDE...

AND CALL IT IN THE AIR.

"YOU CAN'T WIN" PART I

ILLUMINATI SAFEHOUSE.
CADIZ, SPAIN.

THE PERSONAL LOG OF REED RICHARDS. RECORDING...

MY DEAREST VALERIA...

TODAY, I AM FILLED WITH REGRETS, BUT I'VE SO VERY LITTLE TIME FOR THEM.

ALMOST NONE AT ALL.

Dad.

You can't win.

Time to start figuring out how not to lose.

Val

I SEE MANY POTENTIAL OUTCOMES FOR THE NEAR FUTURE--SOME OPTIMISTIC, OTHERS LESS SO...

AND IT WOULD PAIN ME GREATLY IF BY SOME UNFORTUNATE SERIES OF EVENTS I WAS ROBBED NOT JUST OF YOU, BUT OF THE PRIVILEGE OF CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION.

AND AS I CANNOT CONTROL THE FORMER, THIS IS A RECORD OF THE LATTER--ALL THAT I KNOW.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT YOU WILL USE MY EXPERIENCES--THESE LESSONS--TO EASE THE TRANSITION INTO WHAT YOU WILL ONE DAY BECOME.

IT IS MY EVERY EXPECTATION THAT YOU WILL BE SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN I WAS.

ALWAYS ENDEAVOR TO BE YOUR VERY BEST.

SO THEN, WE BEGIN WITH YOUR FIRST LESSON:

TRACKING...

MAKING PLANS AND THE PROPER EXECUTION THEREOF.

WE'VE GOT A HIT.

TRANSLOCATED SIGNAL. TRIANGULATING... IBERIAN PENINSULA.

ARCHANGEL HELICARRIER WING.
LOCATED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

NARROWING...

SOMEWHERE ON THE COAST OF SPAIN. LOOKS LIKE...

CADIZ. THEY'RE IN CADIZ.

THEY'RE IN RANGE, SIR!

OKAY.

DEPLOY THE DRONES. LET'S GO GET THEM.

AH! THERE YOU ARE.

I SEE YOU, STEVE.

SIGNAL LOCKED. INCOMING

THEY'RE ON THE WAY.

YOU SENT THE SIGNAL?

I HAD TO-- ALL THE EXTERNAL FACTORS WE TALKED ABOUT WERE ALIGNED. AND WE'RE NOW OFFICIALLY ON THE CLOCK.

HENRY, IS EVERYTHING IN PLACE?

IT IS INDEED.

THEN WE NEED TO MOVE INTO POSITION... CERTAIN PEOPLE WILL BE EXPECTING A SHOW.

AND SO IT STARTS...

ARCHANGEL COMMAND CENTER.

ETA: FOUR MINUTES.

THE DRONES WE LAUNCHED GOT THERE BEFORE A SECOND TRANSLOCATION SIGNAL WAS IDENTIFIED.

A GENERAL NULL FIELD HAS BEEN ERECTED, AND THE DRONES ARE PROGRAMED WITH DNA TRACKING--IF THE TARGETS MOVE, SO WILL THE FIELD.

THEY CAN FIGHT THEIR WAY OUT OF THERE... BUT NOT BEFORE WE ARRIVE.

DOESN'T TRACK...

THEY KNEW WE'D STILL BE IN THE VICINITY AFTER THEY JUMPED FROM ROME. NO WAY THEY'RE DUMB ENOUGH TO DO IT AGAIN SO SOON.

I THINK IT'S A TRAP.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, STEVE?

ME?

CLEVER BOYS BEING OH SO DAMN CLEVER...

I *KNOW* IT'S A TRAP.

ARCHANGEL WAR MACHINE OPS.

I'M WORRIED THIS IS GOING TO BE TOO MUCH.

YOU SAYING I CAN'T HANDLE IT?

I'M SAYING, RHODEY, THAT I REMEMBER YOU TELLING ME WHAT KIND OF *HEADACHE* THIS THING GAVE YOU WHEN YOU PRACTICED RUNNING *TEN* WAR MACHINES.

AND BY HEADACHE, I MEAN THAT...PLUS THE PRETTY FIERCE NOSEBLEED.

THIS IS... MORE.

I'LL BE FINE, CAROL. THE CONTROL SEAT HAS AN AUTO-SHUTDOWN IF PERMANENT DAMAGE IS IMMINENT.

UH-HUH. BECAUSE THAT'S HOW *TONY* BUILT IT.

YES. BECAUSE THAT'S HOW HE DID IT BACK IN THE DAY...

BUT I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT. I WANT TO HEAR WHO'S ON DECK. YOU GONNA HAVE PROPER BACKUP? BECAUSE IT'S A CONCERN.

WE'LL BE MISSING THE PERSONNEL WHO CYCLED OFF DUTY.

COUPLE PSI-AGENTS. VICTOR WITH THE SECONDARY TEAM. SUSAN WITH THE PRIMARY.

OKAY. WELL, ROTATION GETS THE BEST OF ANY SOLDIER... BUT BE CAREFUL. DNA LOCKS WILL CONFIRM THE MAIN CULPRITS, BUT BE READY FOR ANYTHING...

AND REMEMBER, EVEN IF IT ALL GOES EXACTLY AS PLANNED...THERE'S STILL A *HULK* DOWN THERE.

YEAH. I KNOW.

I'M GONNA KNOCK HIS ASS OUT.

TWO MINUTES LATER.

LAUNCH.

ENTERING COMBAT AREA.

ENGAGING HOSTILE FORCES.

SCANNING.

TARGET LOCATION ACQUIRED. TARGET SIGNAL SEARCHING...

SCANNING...

SCANNING...

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.

WE'RE RIGHT ON TOP OF... OH...OH, NO...

ALERT.

SEISMIC ACTIVITY.

TARGET LOCATED.

CRAP.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE BEGIN WITH THE IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF EXECUTING PROPER GAME THEORY.

WHICH IS, I SUPPOSE, A CUMBERSOME WAY OF SAYING, "KNOW WHO YOU ARE, VALERIA," AS YOUR PERSONALITY WILL DEFINE HOW YOU NATURALLY CONSTRUCT A PLAN.

FOR EXAMPLE: IT'S BEEN SAID MANY TIMES THAT IF YOU WAIT FOR ALL THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO MAKE A CORRECT DECISION, THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ANY DECISION AT ALL MIGHT HAVE PASSED YOU BY.

OKAY. I THINK THEY'RE SUITABLY DISTRACTED.

YOU CAN COME OUT NOW.

OF COURSE, THE OPPOSITE OF THAT IDEA IS THE UNCOMPLICATED MAXIM: GO WITH YOUR GUT.

THE ARGUMENT THERE BEING "INSTINCT IS AN EVOLUTIONARY GOOD BET"--WHICH IS TRUE, UNTIL YOU RUN INTO SOMETHING, OR SOMEONE, A LITTLE HIGHER UP THE FOOD CHAIN...

OR, IN SOME INSTANCES, MAYBE JUST A BIT MORE HUNGRY.

MOST PEOPLE--EVEN GIFTED ONES LIKE YOURSELF--TEND TO FAVOR ONE OF THESE TWO PRINCIPLES, BUT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS AN AMALGAMATION...

MAINTAINING A CONSTANT AWARENESS OF BOTH CONCEPTS AND WAITING TO ACT UNTIL THE MOMENT THEY INTERSECT--WAITING UNTIL BOTH INSTINCT AND INTELLECT COLLIDE.

TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS A PLAN THAT CAN BE EXECUTED WITH PRECISION, BUT ALSO IMPLEMENTED ATEMPORALLY.

MINIMIZE VARIABLES. MAXIMIZE FLEXIBILITY.

WE'RE LOSING TOO MANY UNITS!

I NEED HELP DOWN THERE!

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN RHODEY HOLD OUT?

LESS THAN A MINUTE.

AND HOW LONG UNTIL WE'RE DIRECTLY OVER THE DROP SITE?

LONGER THAN THAT.

AS LONG AS THEY'VE GOT THE HULK--AND UNTIL WE'RE IN POSITION-- WE'VE GOT TO HOLD OFF AS LONG AS WE CAN...

YOU THINK THE TWO OF YOU CAN HELP US WITH THAT?

ABSOLUTELY.

INCOMING, YOU MONSTER.

HUH?

BA-BOOOOOM

NEED A HAND?
NO, CLINT. I GOT THIS.
SURE.
BETTER YOU THAN ME.
UH-HUH.

FEEL BETTER?

EXITING THE ATMOSPHERE-- WE JUST LOST CAROL.

WE JUST NEED THIRTY MORE SECONDS.

ANOTHER THING YOU NEED TO CONSIDER IS CONSISTENCY OF DISPOSITION.

CAN YOU REMAIN CALM WHILE EXECUTING YOUR PLAN? THE ANSWER TO THIS MUST ALWAYS BE YES.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IS THE TOOL MOST OFTEN USED BY ANYONE STANDING IN OPPOSITION TO YOU ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS. MANIPULATION, ULTIMATUMS, THE THREAT OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM...THESE ARE TOOLS OF RESISTANCE.

AND WHILE THEY MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO STOP YOU, LIKE BARNACLES ON A SHIP, THEY ARE ENOUGH TO CAUSE DRAG AND PUT YOUR GOALS IN PERIL. YOU MUST AT ALL TIMES MAINTAIN COMPOSURE.

NOW I WANT TO WARN YOU, VALERIA, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL NOT UNDERSTAND THIS DISPASSION. THEY WILL CALL YOU COLD AND UNFEELING... WHICH IS UNTRUE.

I CAN'T GET THROUGH... THE MOBILE NULL FIELD--

AH, YES...OKAY. RECALIBRATING YOUR COMM.

BE-DOOP

THAT SHOULD DO IT, HENRY. NOW YOU CAN--

ARRGH!

HURK!

WE FEEL AS MUCH AS ANYONE. WE HURT. WE CRY.

BUT WE KEEP IT IN CHECK UNTIL... LATER.

ARE WE GOING TO HAVE A PROBLEM HERE, BOYS...

OR CAN WE FINALLY PUT A QUIET END TO THIS GAME OF CHASE?

HAPPY TO COMPLY, CLINT. BUT I DON'T THINK DOCTOR RICHARDS AND I ARE THE ONES YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT.

BZZTTT

MESSAGE RECEIVED.

STEVE, I'VE GOT REED AND THE BEAST UNDER WRAPS, BUT CAPTAIN BRITAIN, BLACK PANTHER AND THE HULK ARE ALMOST DONE WITH THE WAR MACHINES AND ARE ABOUT TO BECOME A BIG PROBLEM.

PLEASE ADVISE.

STAND BY, CLINT.

MARIA, ARE WE THERE?

YES, SIR. IN POSITION.

OKAY, SEND IN--

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM!

WHAT IN THE...

AND FINALLY WE COME TO STRATEGY-- HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS.

I WON'T BOTHER GOING INTO LIMITED SCENARIOS FOR CLEARLY DEFINED OPPONENTS OR SITUATIONS. THESE ARE SIMPLE AND YOU ARE WELL BEYOND NEEDING YOUR FATHER'S ADVICE ON HANDLING THOSE...

ATTENTION: AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

BUT WHEN FACING A WELL-SEASONED OR TRULY GIFTED OPPONENT, YOU MUST ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO REDEFINE YOUR OPPONENT'S BASE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENCOUNTER.

YOU ATTACK THEIR PRIMARY HYPOTHESES.

FOR EXAMPLE: IF THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT A CONFLICT IS BETWEEN TWO PARTIES-- ONE OF THEM BEING YOURS...

THE FIRST THING YOU DO...

IS INTRODUCE A THIRD.

THIS IS THE AVENGERS ORDERING YOU TO STAND DOWN.

“YOU CAN’T WIN” PART II

CADIZ, SPAIN.
THE AIRSPACE ABOVE AN ILLUMINATI SAFEHOUSE.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...

WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD SOMEONE AS HANDSOME AS I EVER BOTHER TO STICK THIS GLORIOUS MUG IN THE MIDDLE OF WHAT IS, NO DOUBT, A VERY PERSONAL AND VIOLENT AFFAIR.

WELL, STEVE... IT'S A QUESTION THAT HAS A VERY SIMPLE ANSWER.

IT'S LOVE.

I JUST LOVE THE IDEA OF THE AVENGERS. THE MIGHTIEST OF THE MIGHTY COMING TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE THINGS. A GROUP COMMITTED TO PROTECTING THE EARTH WHILE PUTTING ASIDE ALL THEIR PERSONAL DIFFERENCES.

SO, I HAD TO ASK MYSELF... ARE WE FACING AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK? UH-HUH. CHECK. IS IT A LARGE ENOUGH THREAT THAT IT REQUIRES OUR PROTECTING THE ENTIRE PLANET? ABSO-FREAKING-LUTELY.

FINALLY, ARE WE PUTTING ASIDE OUR PERSONAL DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO DO SO? NO. YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS IN HIDING MOST CERTAINLY ARE NOT.

WHICH IS WHERE WE COME IN...AND WE AVENGERS EXPECT A LOT BETTER THAN WHAT WE'VE BEEN SEEING OUT OF OUR FELLOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

SO, WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE NOW IS AN IMMEDIATE STOP TO THE FIGHTING AND A START TO THE FIGURING THIS THING OUT. NOW...ARE YOU GONNA DO THAT, STEVE?

OR AM I GONNA HAVE TO--

CLICK!

MARIA, I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THE GREATEST THREAT THE AVENGERS HAVE EVER FACED IS HEROES WHO LOVE TO HEAR THEMSELVES TALK.

NO COMMENT, SIR.

CLICK!

GIVE US AN UPDATE, RHODEY.

I'M IN THE ZONE, STEVE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY I'M ALSO DOWN TO MY LAST WAVE OF WAR MACHINES.

SO I'M ALMOST DONE AND WILL CERTAINLY BE USELESS AGAINST AN ADDITIONAL THREAT. IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE, NOW'S THE TIME.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WAS THINKING.

MARIA?

ON IT.

DIRECTOR HILL TO DECK COMMAND...

"DEPLOY THE PACKAGE."

OKAY, IT'S TIME.

LET'S GO.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOING THIS.

IT'S WRONG.

ORDERS ARE ORDERS, PAL. AND IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING...

IF YOU REALLY FELT THAT WAY, I THINK YOU'D BE A LITTLE MORE OUTRAGED.

I DON'T REALLY HAVE A CHOICE IN THE MATTER.

WELL, US EITHER.

OFF YOU GO.

HELLO, DOCTOR, YOU MUST BE GETTING TIRED OF SITTING IN THAT CELL ALL DAY, EVERY DAY.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A TRIP? GET OUTSIDE? MAYBE GET A LITTLE EXERCISE?

SOUNDS GREAT, I SAID. ANY CHANCE OF SOME DECENT SCENERY. SOMETHING OF A VIEW?

OH, THEY SAID. IT'LL TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY.

SIGH.

DIRECTOR HILL...

PACKAGE DEPLOYED.

PACKAGE ON ITS WAY, STEVE.

BUT I GOTTA ASK, SHOULDN'T I FEEL A BIT GUILTY ABOUT JUST THROWING A GUY OFF THE SIDE OF A HELICARRIER?

HIS ALTERNATE-WORLD GENOCIDAL AVENGERS CAME HERE FROM AN EARTH THEY CONQUERED, MARIA.

NO, I DON'T FEEL BAD.

SYSTEM ARMED.

"IN FACT, I THINK THE ACTIONS OF OUR FRIENDS DOWN THERE ABSOLUTELY MERIT A RUN-IN WITH AN EMOTIONALLY NEUTERED, SOCIOPATH BANNER.

"MAKING THAT HAPPEN IS JUST A MATTER OF SIGNALING HIS IMPLANTED CONTROL NODE.

"AND I GOT NO PROBLEM FLIPPING THAT SWITCH."

"SYSTEM ACTIVATED."

WHOA.

YEAH. SEISMOLOGISTS ALL OVER THE PLANET ARE HAVING A FIELD DAY RIGHT NOW...

BUT IT'S THE BREATHER WE NEEDED. RETASK ALL AVAILABLE S.H.I.E.L.D. PERSONNEL TO HANDLE DA COSTA'S TEAM, WHILE WE--

FWASSHH!

WHAT THE--

HELLO, STEVE.

ANY CHANCE YOU MIGHT BE MORE OPEN TO ENDING THIS IF THE REQUEST CAME FROM AN OLD FRIEND?

OLD FRIENDS IS WHAT GOT US HERE, NATASHA.

AND THIS IS WHERE YOU RAN OFF TO?

TO JOIN UP WITH SOME OTHER SIDE?

THAT'S MY PROBLEM, STEVE. THERE REALLY AREN'T SIDES HERE AT ALL. IN FACT--

IN FACT NOTHING, NATASHA.

THERE ARE SIDES, AND THOSE PEOPLE DOWN THERE... THEY'RE ON THE WRONG ONE.

THIS ISN'T PETTY. THERE'S A POINT TO IT, AND YOU USED TO UNDERSTAND THAT.

WELL, IF WE CAN'T DO THIS THE EASY WAY...

BZZZT!

ROBERTO. CAPTAIN MARVEL'S RETURNED FROM LOW ORBIT...

I DON'T THINK THERE'S GOING TO BE A SOFT SOLUTION HERE.

ALL RIGHT...

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ON, SHANG.

HOW MANY 'YOUS' ARE YOU SENDING?

ALL OF THEM.

GETTING WORD OF SHANG CHI APPEARING ALL OVER THIS CARRIER. MULTIPLE SIGHTINGS, MULTIPLE DECKS.

WE'RE LOSING GROUND FAST. I'M GONNA PREP THE THING FOR THE THING I'M NOT SO HOT ABOUT...

COME ON, STEVE. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END LIKE THIS.

END?

THIS DOESN'T END UNTIL THEY ANSWER FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE, NATASHA.

IT DOESN'T WASH OFF. UNDERSTAND?

CAROL...

YEAH?

PLEASE KEEP THESE GOOD PEOPLE FROM GETTING IN THE WAY...

...AS OUR FIGHT'S NOT WITH THEM.

PSSTTT!

YOU HAVE THE BRIDGE.

I'M GONNA BE SICK. YOU SURE THIS IS GOING TO WORK?

MOBILE CONTROL UNIT IS ONLINE...

SENDING COMMAND.

"CATCH."

WHHUMP!

NOT GONNA LIE...

I COULD GET USED TO HAVING A FULL-TIME REMOTE-CONTROL HULK.

MIGHT MAKE DAYS LIKE THESE A LITTLE MORE INFREQUENT.

STEVE!

PLEASE! I'M BEGGING YOU. JUST LET US DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. IT'S NOT TOO LATE...WE THINK THERE ARE STILL OPTIONS--THINGS WE HAVEN'T TRIED.

DON'T MAKE THIS ANY WORSE THAN IT ALREADY IS.

HRMPT!

YOU THERE, SAM?

YES.

OKAY.... READY TO LET THESE PEOPLE IN ON OUR LITTLE SECRET?

UH-HUH. ABOUT TIME.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, HENRY? YOU PEOPLE AND YOUR BIG IDEAS.

YOU GOT PLANS...WELL, SO DO I.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

LUKE CAGE

WHITE TIGER

SHE-HULK

SPIDER-MAN

BLUE MARVEL

POWER MAN

SPECTRUM

THE PROLONGED OBJECT OF ANY PLAN IS NOT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT, BUT TO DISCOVER WHAT YOUR OPPONENT IS CAPABLE OF.

WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN IS GAUGING THEIR RESPONSE TO YOUR ACTIONS.

WHEN I SPOKE OF CHALLENGING A GIFTED OPPONENT'S PRIMARY HYPOTHESIS, I USED THE EXAMPLE OF DISRUPTING A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO PARTIES--YOU AND THEM--BY INTRODUCING A THIRD GROUP...

YOUR OPPONENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS WILL INFORM YOUR NEXT ACTION.

FOR INSTANCE, LET US EXAMINE MY RECENT CONFLICT WITHIN THE MULTIFACETED AVENGERS MACHINE AS A TEST CASE FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING.

STEVE ROGERS' RESPONSE TO THE THIRD-PARTY SCENARIO (THE AVENGERS WORLD TEAM) WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF AN ALT-UNIVERSE HULK ANALOG.

AN EFFECTIVE CHOICE. UNPREDICTABLE. UNEXPECTED.

BUT EVEN GIVEN THAT, IF THE HULK WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS SOLE RESPONSE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A FUTILE EFFORT AS HE WOULD HAVE EXPOSED HIS TRUE INTENTIONS TOO EARLY FOR THE NUMBER OF VARIABLES AT PLAY.

BUT THIS IS STEVE ROGERS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, VALERIA...SO IT WAS NOT.

THE HULK DID SERVE AS AN EXCELLENT BRANCHING SCENARIO, ENABLING CAPTAIN ROGERS TO HOLD DOWN TWO FRONTS (S.H.I.E.L.D. ENGAGED WITH THE AVENGERS WORLD, WHILE HE ENGAGED WITH US).

IN FACT, HAD HE NOT SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE LOSSES MAINTAINING A ZONE OF CONFLICT (PREVENTING US FROM AN EARLY TACTICAL RETREAT VIA TRANSLOCATOR), THE HULK GAMBIT MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MAKING US INTRODUCE OUR ASSETS INTO THE FIELD EARLIER THAN DESIRED.

BUT HE DID SUFFER LOSSES, SO HE WAS FORCED TO INTRODUCE A FOURTH PARTY--HIS SECRET AVENGERS.

YOU!

IMMENSELY POWERFUL. TACTICALLY VARIED. AN EXCELLENT STRATEGEM, BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HIS LAST PIECE AVAILABLE ON THE BOARD.

IT'S OVER, RICHARDS!

TIME TO PAY!

HAVEN'T WE ALL PAID ENOUGH THIS TIME?

REMEMBER, AS I SAID EARLIER, THE OBJECT OF ANY PLAN IS NOT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT, BUT TO DISCOVER WHAT YOUR OPPONENT IS CAPABLE OF...

AND ONCE YOU KNOW THAT, YOU CAN MANIPULATE THE BOARD TO ENGINEER, AND MANAGE, A SUCCESSFUL ENDGAME.

WHAT IS...

OH, NO.

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN.

THAT'S RIGHT. DISAPPOINTING I'M SURE...

AND YOU MUST BE WONDERING HOW SHE PULLED IT OFF.

AS YOU PUT IN A LOT OF EFFORT. TRACKING DEVICES. DAILY SCANS...

YOU WERE SO CAREFUL.

BUT WE WERE EVEN MORE SO.

HERE SHE IS NOW.

IF YOU WANT, I'M SURE SHE'LL WALK YOU THROUGH EXACTLY HOW WE DID IT, BUT I'M GUESSING YOU'RE GOING TO BE MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

THE THING ABOUT ENDGAMES IS THIS...

IT'S REALLY TWO STRATEGIES IN ONE.

FIRST, YOU SHOW THEM WHAT THEY GUESSED MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMING.

AND THEN...

YOU SHOW THEM WHAT THEY DIDN'T.

“WE THREE KINGS”

WAKANDA.
THEN.

COME FORWARD, MY SON.

I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU.

WHAT IS IT, FATHER?

THIS BELONGED TO MY FATHER AND TO HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM.

IT IS A *KING'S BLADE*, T'CHALLA...

AND IT BELONGS TO A KING.

CADIZ, SPAIN.
NOW.

WHAT IS NAMOR DOING HERE, REED?

WHAT IS THIS?

DO YOU TRUST ME?

TRUST ME.

HELLO, EVERYONE.

SORRY I WAS RUNNING LATE. CAN I HELP IN ANY WAY?

AGENT RICHARDS... I'M GONNA GIVE YOU EXACTLY *THREE SECONDS* TO DROP THIS FIELD AND EXPLAIN WHAT YOU'RE DOING...

OR I'M GONNA HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR WHERE MY TEMPER TAKES ME.

I'LL BE HAPPY TO DO THAT, STEVE...

AS LONG AS YOU PROMISE TO LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

YOU GOT FIVE MINUTES.

SO...THE TWO OF YOU ALL ALONG?

YES.

YOU'RE JUST AS BAD AS HE IS.

WAIT, HOW DID YOU GET BY THE SCREENINGS, SUE? YOU KNEW ABOUT THE HEADSHOP, BUT THERE WERE DAILY SCANS YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT.

BECAUSE THEY ARE WHO THEY ARE, AND *WE* ARE MERE MORTALS.

ACTUALLY, IT'S NOT THAT DIFFICULT IF YOU UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW THE--

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.

I--ONCE AGAIN--DO NOT NEED REMINDING JUST HOW CLEVER ALL OF YOU ARE, AND HOW EFFICIENT AND INVENTIVE YOU CAN BE GIVEN THE RIGHT SITUATION...

I REMEMBER PERFECTLY FINE.

NO ONE LIKES BEING DECEIVED, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN, STEVE--TO REMOVE *THE CABAL*...

IF IT ONLY TOOK ONE MORE LIE TO UNRAVEL THE ENTIRE WEB--BUY A MOMENT FOR US TO ACTUALLY TALK--THAT'S SOMETHING WE CAN LIVE WITH, ISN'T IT?

NO, HANK. I CAN'T LIVE WITH ANY MORE OF THIS... AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO EITHER.

ALL RIGHT. WHY DON'T WE MOVE ON TO ADDRESSING THE LARGER, MORE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM, GENTLEMEN?

WE CAN DO THAT TOO, ROBERTO.

WELL, SUPER. CAN I JUST SAY THAT I THINK IT'S *FANTASTIC* WE'RE OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES AND HOPEFULLY COMING TOGETHER ON THIS? SO...

...LET'S HEAR THIS LONG AWAITED SOLUTION TO THE INCURSION PROBLEM.

I DON'T THINK SO-- NOT YET.

NO STICK. NO CARROT. UNDERSTAND?

I WANT IT CLEAR THAT THIS DOESN'T END WITHOUT YOU PEOPLE ANSWERING FOR WHAT YOU DID.

PEOPLE WHO DO WHAT YOU'VE DONE DON'T GET HAPPY ENDINGS.

NAMOR...

IT COULDN'T BE AVOIDED-- DESTROYING THAT FIRST WORLD. IT HAD TO BE DONE. THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE.

GIVEN THE CHANCE...I WOULD DO IT AGAIN.

IF YOU THINK THIS IS HELPING YOUR--

BUT IT WAS *WRONG*.

I KNOW THAT. I HAD TO DO IT... BUT IT WAS WRONG.

AND I SHOULD ANSWER FOR THAT.

AM I HEARING YOU RIGHT? YOU'LL SURRENDER? TURN YOURSELF IN?

YES.

THERE WILL BE A TRIAL--YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU?

I DO.

I DESERVE WHAT IS COMING TO ME. I'M NOT RUNNING FROM ANY PUNISHMENT.

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU, REED?

IF IT COMES TO THAT, I'LL DO WHAT'S BEST...

OR AT THE VERY LEAST, WHAT I NEED TO.

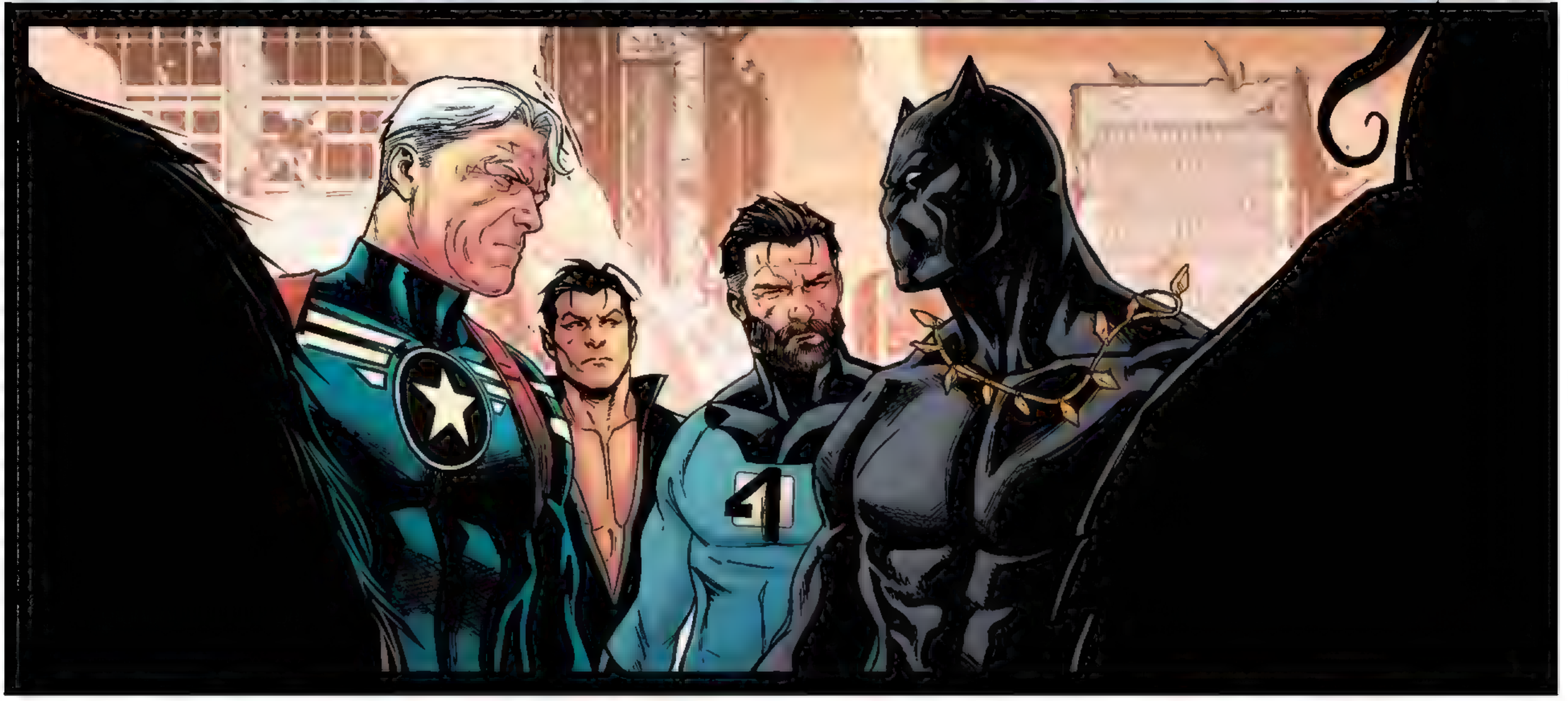
AND THE REST OF YOU THAT WERE THERE?

HANK?

THERE WERE ALWAYS VERY FEW POSSIBLE ENDINGS TO THIS, STEVE. I HAVE PREPARED MYSELF AS BEST I CAN FOR ALL OF THEM.

AND YOU, T'CHALLA--YOU'LL TURN YOURSELF IN?

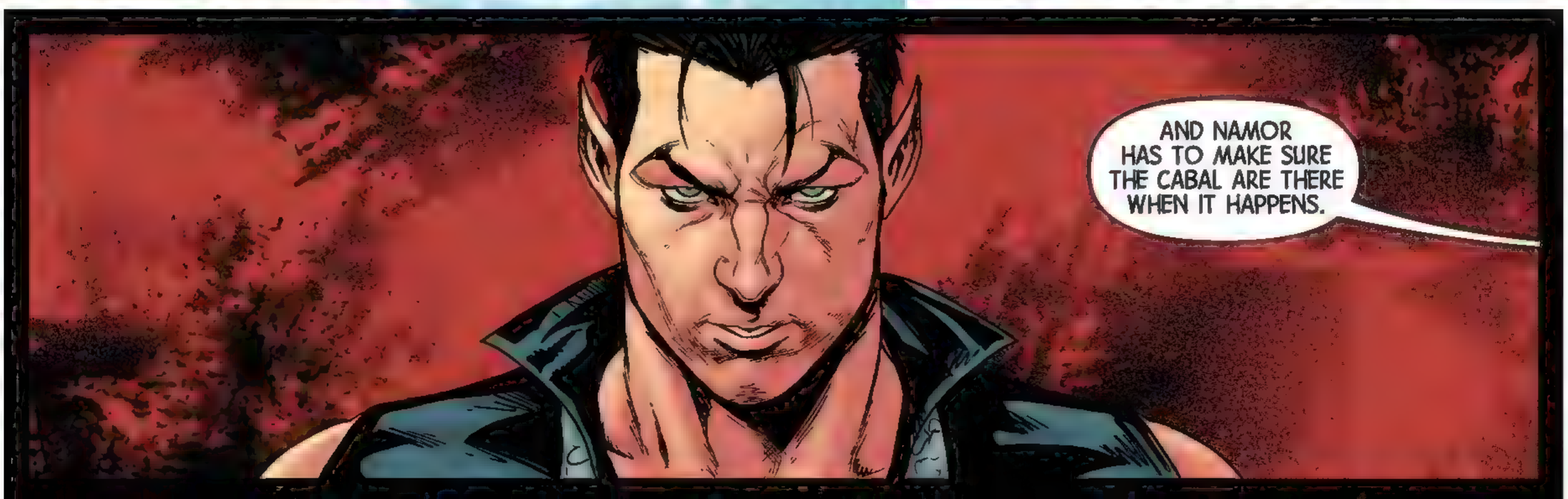
ABSOLUTELY NOT.



WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
I DON'T CARE. WE'RE NOT PUTTING THIS OFF ANY LONGER. HERE AND NOW, THERE'S NOTHING THAT MATTERS MORE.
ACTUALLY, THAT'S NOT TRUE...

THERE'S A REASON THIS IS HAPPENING NOW... JUST LIKE THERE'S A REASON NAMOR IS HERE.
WHEN I SAY WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS...I MEAN, WE LITERALLY DO NOT HAVE TIME.

IN A LITTLE UNDER TWO HOURS, THERE'S GOING TO BE AN INCURSION...


AND NAMOR HAS TO MAKE SURE THE CABAL ARE THERE WHEN IT HAPPENS.

NECROPOLIS.
TWO HOURS LATER.

07:43:10

IT'S TIME.

HAS IT BEEN DECIDED WHO ELSE IS GOING?

LORD THANOS WANTS US ALL AT THE INCURSION POINT.

THERE IS URGENCY IN THE AIR.

OH? A *CAUTIONARY* COURSE OF ACTION?

HOW SURPRISING.

STAY IF YOU WISH, BUT SOME SURPRISES CAUSE EVEN THE FEARLESS TO PAUSE, NAMOR...

MAXIMUS HAS DISCOVERED SOMETHING... UNSETTLING.

THE CLOCK IS RUNNING OUT, PRINCE NAMOR. TICK TOCK. TICK TOCK.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE ***PREPARED*** IN THE COMING DAYS. YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH ONE IS GOING TO BE YOUR LAST.

THERE'S BEEN AN EVENT, AND HE SAYS OUR TIMELINE GROWS SHORTER...

SO NOW YOU UNDERSTAND MY CAUTION, AND WHY THIS NEXT WORLD GETS OUR METTLE AND NOT ONE BIT LESS.

I KNOW... WHAT ***THEY*** KNOW.

I DON'T GO ***ANYWHERE*** WITHOUT MY LITTLE LEXICON OF HOPE.

BUT I MUST SAY...

...THERE USED TO BE MORE *SUSPENSE* AT THE BEGINNING OF THESE THINGS-- I MISS THE NOT KNOWING.

MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST LET THEM COME...DO WHAT THEY DO...

ALL OF THIS IS GETTING REPETITIVE...

AND I'M *ITCHING* FOR SOME EXCITEMENT.

IT ONLY TAKES A SINGLE *SIDERA MARIS* TO SUMMON THEIR MASTERS, MAXIMUS.

BEST NOT RISK A MAPMAKER.

BEST NOT RISK WHAT MIGHT *FOLLOW THEM.*

HERE THEY COME.

THEN.

COME FORWARD, T'CHALLA.

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?

I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU, SISTER.

WHEN I WAS A BOY, FATHER GAVE ME HIS BLADE, WHICH BELONGED TO HIS FATHER, THE KING BEFORE HIM.

AND NOW, SHURI...IT IS YOURS.

FOR IT IS A KING'S BLADE... AND IT BELONGS WITH *MY QUEEN.*

SO YOU PLANNED ALL THIS TO COINCIDE WITH AN INCURSION?

YOU PLANNED IT... RIGHT DOWN TO THE MINUTE?

OF COURSE NOT.

DOWN TO THE MINUTE WOULD REQUIRE AN *ABSURD* ACCOUNTING OF VARIABLES THAT, I BELIEVE, JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE.

BUT A WINDOW OF HOURS? WE COULD DO THAT.

IN FACT, WE *DID*.

OKAY. I'LL CONCEDE...IT'S IMPRESSIVE ENOUGH TO GIVE A MAN PAUSE.

EXPLAIN THE REST OF IT TO ME.

FOR SOME TIME, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO PROJECT OUT WHAT KIND OF INCURSION IS GOING TO OCCUR.

WHAT'S COMING IS A *MAPMAKER WORLD*, WHICH IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT'S A COMPLETELY DEAD PLANET. THE PLAN IS SIMPLE--NAMOR IS GOING TO LEAD THE CABAL TO THE WORLD...

OKAY. I'M NOT PRETENDING TO UNDERSTAND THE TOTAL MECHANICS OF THIS--AND MAYBE A LIFE OF SPYCRAFT HAS GIVEN ME AN INCREASED SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION--BUT HAS ANYONE CONSIDERED WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY TRY TO ESCAPE THE EXPLODING PLANET?

ACTUALLY, WE HAVE *YOUR* AVENGERS TEAM TO THANK FOR THAT SOLUTION, NATASHA.

THEN THEY PAY FOR THEIR CRIMES... FOLLOWED BY US, I SUPPOSE.

YES. ROBERTO GAVE ME ACCESS TO SOME OF THE THINGS A.I.M. WAS DOING AS POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO THE INCURSION PROBLEM, AND...

HOLD ON A SECOND.

SAM, DID THE GOOD PROFESSOR MCCOY REALLY JUST *DOUBLE-AGENT* US? SAY IT ISN'T SO.

IT HURTS, SIR. RIGHT HERE.

THE LESSONS NEVER END, CHILDREN. AND WHAT DID WE LEARN TODAY?

MONEY CAN'T BUY YOU LOVE?

NEVER TRUST A BLUE MAN?

ARE YOU QUITE DONE?

NO. WE BOTH TALKED ABOUT IT, AND WE AGREED...YOU LOOKED COOLER AS A CAT.

CAN WE CONTINUE? *PLEASE.*

WHERE WAS... AH, YES--A.I.M.'S ESCUTCHEON... REED?

THE A.I.M. DESIGN WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO PREVENT THE COLLISION OF WORLDS--IT'S A FIELD PROJECTOR THAT CREATES AN IMPENETRABLE BARRIER COVERING THE INCURSION POINT.

THE IDEA BEING THAT IF YOU CAN PREVENT THE TWO WORLDS FROM TOUCHING, YOU COULD--PERHAPS--PREVENT THE CASCADING FAILURE OF BOTH UNIVERSES.

"TWO PROTOTYPES WERE BUILT AND ONE WAS TESTED IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE USING TWO SMALL MOONS.

"IT SUCCEEDED, BUT ANALYSIS SHOWED THAT IT WOULDN'T HAVE HANDLED STRESSES BEYOND FIVE TIMES THE TEST AMOUNT."

SO...BAD FOR SAVING THE WORLD.

BUT PERFECT FOR KEEPING THE CABAL WHERE YOU WANT THEM.

LIKE I SAID, NAMOR WILL LEAD THEM TO THE MAPMAKER WORLD...

THEN THEY WILL SET THEIR BOMB IN PLACE. AFTER THAT, HE'LL LEAVE AND ACTIVATE THE SHIELD--WHICH WE WILL LAUNCH FROM OUR SIDE.

THEN YOU'RE GOING TO BLOW UP THE DEAD WORLD AND THE CABAL ALONG WITH IT?

YES.

THE LAST ACT OF A FREE MAN, I SUPPOSE.

THEN.

ALL THAT REMAINS OF WAKANDA IS ASH AND RUBBLE. SEE, BROTHER...IT'S *ALL* NECROPOLIS NOW.

A CITY OF GHOSTS. A KINGDOM OF NOTHING BUT THE DEAD.

CAN I TRUST YOU TO FINISH THIS?

I COULD DO BETTER-- I COULD STAY.

NO. YOU CAN'T.

THEN YOU HAVE MY WORD, SISTER.

I SWEAR IT.

THIS WAS OUR FATHER'S BLADE, T'CHALLA...

TAKE IT. FOR IT BELONGS TO A KING, AND ONLY YOU ARE KING NOW...

PUT THE BLADE WHERE IT BELONGS.

NOW.

THEY'RE ENGAGED.

WE'RE IN THE CLEAR.

OKAY. NOW, ROBERTO...

DOCTOR. YOU HAVE A GO. PLEASE LAUNCH THE PLATFORM.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR. IN THREE... TWO...ONE...

PLATFORM AWAY.

I'VE GOT A FIRM READ OF THE PLATFORM. IT'S SLOWING... SETTLING IN A STABLE POSITION OUTSIDE THE MIDPOINT OF BOTH WORLDS.

SIGNAL NAMOR.

PLATFORM IN PLACE.

BE-BOOP

THE ANTI-MATTER BOMB IS ARMED.

I'M LEAVING NOW.

REED...

WHERE'S T'CHALLA?

T'CHALLA!

I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU, NAMOR.

AND WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU PLANNING ON DOING WITH THAT?

TAKE IT. FOR IT BELONGS TO A KING, AND ONLY YOU ARE KING NOW...

PUT THE BLADE WHERE IT BELONGS.

YOU... YOU DARE?

YOU DARE TO THINK YOU COULD KILL ME WITH A KNIFE?

NO. I JUST PUT THE BLADE WHERE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO.

THAT'S NOT WHAT'S GOING TO KILL YOU.

HUH?

OH! BLACK BOLT. WHAT ARE--

FAREWELL!

OKAY. FIRST THE SHIELD...

THEN THE TRIGGER.

I KNOW THAT LOOK. YOU'RE WONDERING...

WHAT AM I *WAITING* FOR?

NAMOR'S BIOLOGY AND GENETICS MAKE HIM INCREDIBLY RESISTANT TO DAMAGE, BUT EVEN HE DOESN'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO SIMPLY SHRUG OFF WHAT WE--AND THE RESULTING FALL FROM THIS PLATFORM--DID TO HIM.

"IT WILL TAKE A SECOND FOR HIM TO FULLY REGAIN HIS WITS...AND I WANT HIM COMPLETELY AWARE OF WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO HIM.

"SO WE WILL SPARE HIM A FEW MINUTES."

BECAUSE I WANT HIM TO KNOW--REALLY KNOW--*IT'S OVER.*

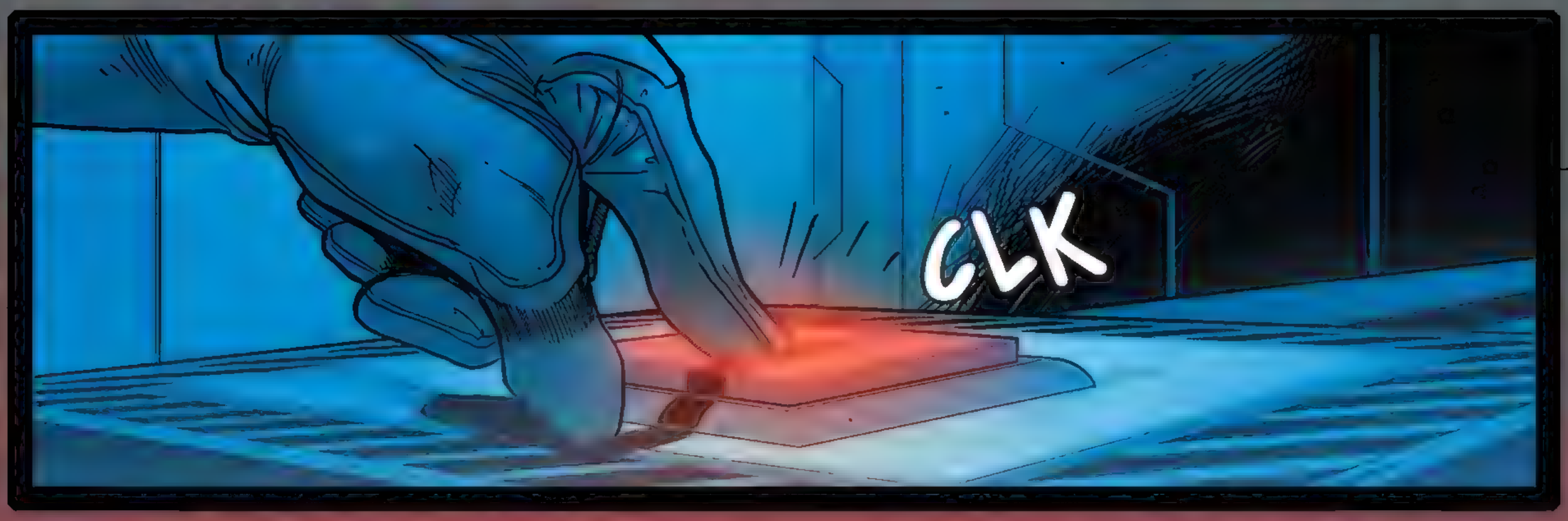
"TO FULLY REALIZE THERE'S NO FORGIVENESS FOR WHAT HE'S DONE.

"THAT THERE IS A PRICE AND HE'S FINALLY GOING TO PAY IT--THAT'S THERE'S NO MERCY FOR MEN LIKE HIM, AND EVEN IF THERE WAS, HE DOESN'T GET ANY.

"I WANT HIM TO KNOW THIS IS HOW IT ENDS.

"AND MORE THAN THAT...

"I WANT HIM TO KNOW... IT WAS ME."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WHERE IS HE, T'CHALLA?

WHERE'S NAMOR?

HE'S NOT COMING.

SO ENDS THE CABAL.

“8 MONTHS AGO...”

THE NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

SOMETHING BAD HAPPENED HERE.

LATER.

WHEN YOU LOOK OUT AT ALL THIS--ALL THAT WE HAD A HAND IN...

...WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT, MY FRIEND?

THAT WE ARE ALMOST AT THE END, BUT BEFORE WE REACH IT, THERE IS EVEN WORSE COMING.

I WISH I COULD SAY SOMETHING ELSE, BUT THAT'S THE TRUTH... AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH ELSE LEFT.

SHOULD I EVEN ASK WHAT *YOU* THINK, T'CHALLA?

I THINK YOU ARE RIGHT.

AND I BELIEVE WITH EACH PASSING DAY I GROW MORE AND MORE READY TO FACE IT.

OUR COMPANY JUST ARRIVED.

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THEM EVERYTHING?

YES.

"IT'S THE TRUTH...

"WHAT ELSE DO WE HAVE?"

LATER.

SO WHAT IS IT WE'RE LOOKING AT?

WE HAVE THEORIES...

BUT IF I'M BEING COMPLETELY HONEST, WE'RE NOT SURE.

WHAT WE *DO* KNOW IS THAT THIS HAS HAPPENED AT EVERY SINGLE FORMER INCURSION SITE ON THIS EARTH.

IT'S A RECENT DEVELOPMENT THAT VARIOUS WORLD GOVERNMENTS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CABAL, HAD KEPT QUIET, BUT GIVEN THE NEW STATUS QUO...

...SUNSPOT AND HIS TEAM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS, HENCE THE FOOTAGE WE HAVE HERE.

WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED POLITICIANS LOVED MONEY SO MUCH?

THE PERTINENT POINT BEING...

...EARLY A.I.M. DATA INDICATES THAT THE APPEARANCE OF THESE DOMES ROUGHLY COINCIDES WITH WHAT WAS THE CATALYST OF OUR RECENT ACTIVITY.

YOU MEAN THE WAY YOU MOVED EVERYONE AROUND THE BOARD AS YOU SAW FIT...

...AND HOW IT ENDED WITH A MAN'S MURDER?

YOU KNOW THAT WASN'T MY INTENTION.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, T'CHALLA?

DID YOU GET WHAT YOU WANTED?

WE SIT WITHIN EYESIGHT OF THE SMOLDERING RUINS OF MY NATION, BARTON.

I DIDN'T GET ANYTHING I WANTED. I HAVEN'T FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

WELL, WHAT *I* WANT...

...IS FOR ALL OF YOU TO STAY ON TASK, WITH YOUR HEAD IN THE HERE AND NOW.

I KNOW IT'S HARD TO HEAR, BUT NO ONE CARES ABOUT YOUR SINS OR ANGER...OR EVEN YOUR REGRET.

I ***WOULD*** CARE...BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME.

TIME. YES.

THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND. I THINK THERE'S AN UNDENIABLE SIGNIFICANCE TO THESE SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED EVENTS...I SPOKE OF A ***CATALYST.***

THERE'S A REASON FOR WHEN WE ACTED. IT WAS NECESSARY TO DO SO IN THE SHADOW OF A COMING INCURSION.

WE NEEDED THE URGENCY THAT THREAT PROVIDED.

BUT WHY ***THAT*** INCURSION? WHY AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME?

BECAUSE SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED...

EVEN THOUGH WE WERE ON THE RUN FROM S.H.I.E.L.D. AND IN HIDING FROM THE CABAL, I MAINTAINED A MOBILE VERSION OF ***THE BRIDGE,*** WHICH ENABLED US TO OBSERVE THE MULTIVERSE.

THE COLLAPSE CONTINUED--UNABATED--AND INCURSIONS HAD CLAIMED THE VAST MAJORITY OF UNIVERSES, BUT STILL HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS REMAINED.

THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED--I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT--BUT THE CURRENT NUMBER OF REMAINING UNIVERSES NOW STANDS AT ***LESS THAN TWO DOZEN.***

SO... TIME?

WE ARE ALL OUT OF TIME.

ELSEWHERE.

FWASSHH

SERENITY CLEARS THE MIND, MISTER REECE... BUT THIS?

THIS IS NOTHING, AND NOTHING BUT DISQUIETING.

NOTHING *NOW*, BUT IF YOU LOOK BACKWARDS YOU'LL SEE THERE WAS *SOMETHING*.

I LIVED HERE ONCE. SOME SMALL BIT OF ME CALLED IT HOME.

YOU WANTED TO SEE WHERE IT ALL STARTED... WELL, HERE IT IS, VICTOR...

OR DO YOU NEED TO SEE IT MORE CLEARLY?

YES.

THEN YOU'LL NEED TO GET BUSY. I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY, BUT I CAN'T OPEN THE DOOR.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS, VICTOR?

I DO.

EVERYONE HAS LIMITS...

...EVERYONE BUT *DOOM*.

I'VE BUILT YOUR *DOOR*, MISTER REECE...

...CAN YOU SHOW US THE WAY NOW THAT I'VE OPENED IT?

THE WAY IS DOWN, VICTOR...

...ALL THE WAY DOWN.

"A DOZEN?"

ONLY A *DOZEN* UNIVERSES LEFT?

TWO DOZEN, MANIFOLD. WELL, JUST UNDER...

CURRENTLY TWENTY-TWO, I THINK...BUT PROJECTIONS GET FUZZY WITH THE VARIABLES WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

WELL, WHAT DOES THAT *MEAN?*

ACTUALLY...

WHY DON'T WE SKIP THE EXPLANATIONS AND JARGON, REED? SINCE, AS YOU SAY, WE'RE OUT OF TIME...

...JUST TELL US WHAT YOUR PLAN IS.

MY PLAN FOR WHAT?

YOUR PLAN FOR WHAT?

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU *THINK?* HOW TO STOP THIS!

YOU *DO* HAVE A PLAN, RIGHT?

I THINK I REMEMBER THE *IMPLICATION* OF A PLAN. AT THE VERY LEAST SOME *VAGUE PROMISE* OF A PLAN.

WHAT ELSE WERE YOU DOING ALL THESE MONTHS WHEN THE CABAL WAS BUYING YOU TIME WITH WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER IF YOU WEREN'T FIGURING THAT OUT?!

RUNNING FROM OUR FRIENDS.

YEAH. WE ALL FEEL JUST TERRIBLE ABOUT THAT.

REED?

IF YOU STARE AT ALL THIS LONG ENOUGH, YOU START BELIEVING IT MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING THAT IT DOESN'T.

BUT THAT ISN'T REAL, STEVE.

IT ISN'T REAL *AT ALL.*

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER INCURSION. AND ANOTHER...BUT THERE HAVE BEEN *CHANGES.*

CHANGES SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH THAT WE PUT INTO ACTION ALL THE MACHINATIONS YOU WERE SWEPT UP IN.

CHANGES LIKE WHAT?

OUR ODDS ARE BETTER.

ANYTHING ELSE?

WE'VE RUN A LOT OF SIMULATIONS--AND I COULD BE WRONG, BECAUSE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT COLLAPSING SPACE-TIME ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE--BUT WE'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT PREDICTING ***WHEN*** AN INCURSION'S GOING TO HAPPEN...

AND THERE APPEARS TO BE A SILVER LINING.

WHICH IS?

REED AND I THINK THAT WE'RE GOING TO MISS THEM ALL...

EXCEPT ONE.

THE LAST ONE.

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

WE HAVE NO IDEA.

CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING? AND I DON'T MEAN TO BE THIS WAY, BUT WHY HAVEN'T YOU ACTUALLY DONE ANYTHING?

AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THEORY, OR RUNNING EXPERIMENTS IN A LAB... I'M TALKING ABOUT ACTUALLY ***DOING SOMETHING.***

WHILE SHE WAS OUR PRISONER, THE BLACK SWAN OUTLINED SOME POSSIBLE WAYS TO SURVIVE INCURSIONS. WE NARROWED THOSE DOWN TO WHAT WE CONSIDERED BOTH HUMANE AND ACHIEVABLE.

WE STARTED WITH A COSMIC CUBE.

"WE TRIED MAKING WORLDS--A SERIES OF ***EXODUS PLANETS.***

"OUR THINKING WAS, BLOW UP OUR OWN EARTH PREVENTING FURTHER INCURSIONS AND MOVE THE POPULATION TO EXODUS PRIME WHERE WE COULD CONDUCT OPERATIONS TO SAVE THE MULTIVERSE WITHOUT A 'TICKING CLOCK.'

"BUT ONE OF THE STARS WE PICKED--LIKE SO MANY ARE DOING NOW--EXPERIENCED AN EARLY DEATH.

"AND WE LOST THE CUBE.

"WE TRIED METAPHYSICAL APPROACHES--EVEN GETTING ***GALACTUS*** TO HELP ARRANGE AN AUDIENCE WITH ***THE CELESTIALS***--BUT AFTER WHAT SEEMED TO BE PROGRESS IN GAINING THEIR ASSISTANCE...

"THEY ALL SIMPLY DISAPPEARED.

"THEN WE TRIED MULTIVERSAL SOLUTIONS...WHICH WAS ***BEYOND*** A DISASTER.

"I WOULDN'T WISH WHAT HAPPENED TO BRADDOCK ON ANYONE."

AND THERE WERE... OTHER ATTEMPTS.

"BUT THEY ALSO FAILED."

OVER THE PAST MONTHS WE *ALL* HAVE PAID.

BUT WHILE YOU WERE PLAYING *HERO*, WE WERE PLAYING *GOD*.

OUR COSTS WERE MUCH, MUCH HIGHER.

OKAY. BUT WHAT ABOUT *CAUSE*...

IF THERE AREN'T ANY SOLUTIONS...ARE YOU ANY CLOSER TO FIGURING OUT WHO--OR WHAT--IS BEHIND THIS?

WE TRIED QUITE A FEW--

HUH...

ISN'T THAT JUST LIKE THE UNIVERSE?

ONE LAST GASP...

HE'S BACK.

WHO'S BACK?

REED, WHO ARE YOU--

TONY AND I SENT SOMEONE OUT INTO THE MULTIVERSE TO FIND ANSWERS ALMOST EIGHT MONTHS AGO.

HE WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE GONE A SHORT WHILE--WEEKS--SO I ASSUMED HE WAS LOST FOREVER.

BUT NOW HE'S RETURNED TO US.

REED...

HOME?

AM... I REALLY... REALLY *HOME?*

YES, HANK... YOU'RE HOME.

YOU MADE IT BACK.

BACK HOME. THANK GOD.

REED.

REED, I FOUND... I FOUND...

RABUM ALAL? YOU SUCCEEDED? YOU FOUND HIM?

THE GREAT DESTROYER?

NO. NOT THE DESTROYER.

THE... THE *IVORY KINGS.*

IVORY KINGS.

THE WHITE LORDS FROM WILD SPACE. FROM OUT THERE...

FROM BEYOND...

I FOUND...

...THE BEYONDERS.

"OVER THERE"

EARTH-1610.
MANHATTAN.
SIX MONTHS AGO.

THE TRISKELION.
HEADQUARTERS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

If you don't mind me asking, sir...

Why revisit *outdated notions?*

Don't get me wrong--while I'm too young to have ever experienced it myself--I understand the neurochemical payoff of nostalgia...

It just doesn't seem to make much sense when we're talking about antiquated strategies and institutions that died out a decade ago.

The world didn't pass *The Ultimates* by, Reed...

We just weren't prepared for what it was *becoming*. That we weren't ready cost a lot of good people their lives...

Righting the ship cost even more.

We've paid a lot over the years to get back to where we are.

You don't have to explain that to me, General Fury...

I understand perfectly well.

What I can't make sense of is *why I'm here.*

You started off in the Baxter "teen think tank" with an incredibly bright future, Reed. You even became a super hero.

Then you fell from grace. Created a self-aware future city that wiped out half of Europe.

Then came your recent resurrection. Back from the dark side on the side of the angels. Hell, son, if you think about it, you're the perfect person for the job.

What job?

Get in. I'll show you.

What is--

The Triskelion stations are just the start. I've got unlimited funds, U.N.-sponsored unilateral control, and the hunger that only a starving man can understand. I'm *rebuilding S.H.I.E.L.D.*, Reed...

And what I'm building is going to be *better.*

So why are you here?

You are here to help me. I want your ***vision***, to make sure that what happened last time doesn't happen again.

I want you to think hard...

Every doomsday scenario that you can ponder, I wanna have a contingency plan for it.

Okay...

Why?

You tell ***me***, Reed...

Ever get a feelin' there's someone out there who ain't gonna rest until they've brought the whole thing down around our ears?

EARTH-1610.
MILES BELOW MANHATTAN.
NOW.

4

Identify: Richards, Reed. Maker. Access granted.

How was your time away?

Some love the charade...

Putting on a lie while hiding the truth far beneath the surface. They love the game.

And you?

I hate it. A man dreams a millennium into the future, but wakes to this.

I am not an idea that can be erased on a whim. I *changed*... and there is no going back.

A status report, please.

You have three items that I have prioritized as [Response: Essential]...

In which order would you like them?

Sigh. Please start with the boring one.

Very well. The first item is actually more of an organization question, really...

It appears as if an ambitious S.H.I.E.L.D. programmer has taken it upon herself to create a hydra to sniff out emerging infant A.I.s on all three global networks we are currently observing.

Evasion is fairly simple at this point, but within six generations it will achieve contact.

What do we know about the programmer?

I have read her manifesto. Interestingly, her ideological curve is fear-based and will eventually trend antitechnology, Maker.

I would say that she'd quietly descend into Ludditism, erasing the hydra, but her work will be coopted by government intervention before that occurs.

Okay. Let's continue to observe for now.

What's next?

There is an incursion projected to occur in the next two days.

Of course.

How many worlds have I killed now, City?

Sixty-seven.

I'm getting too good at this.

Superior life forms adapt and survive...and none more than you.

You're the most advanced human in the history of your planet...it should be expected that you've also grown into its most proficient killer.

But if it's the repetition you tire of, you'll be interested in the final item I've prioritized.

Oh?

What's that?

I witnessed something through the Bridge today, Maker--something beyond our current understanding has occurred...

Yesterday there were hundreds of thousands of universes remaining in the multiverse.

Yes. And?

Today there are less than two dozen.

Well, you're right...

That *is* interesting.

UNIVERSE-616.
SHI'AR SPACE.

BEGIN PLAYBACK.

PAUSE AT THE APEX, PLEASE.

SHARRA AND K'YTHRI.

I NEED AN AUDIENCE WITH THE MAJESTOR. *IMMEDIATELY.*

ARE YOU SURE?

YES.

IT STARTED A YEAR AGO, BUT WITH THE BUILDER WAR AND WHAT FOLLOWED, WE FAILED TO NOTICE.

I FAILED TO NOTICE.

WHEN WE STARTED EXPERIENCING CELESTIAL EVENTS, OUR FIRST INSTINCTS WERE THAT IT WAS RANDOM PHENOMENA...

THEN WHEN THEY CONTINUED, THE ENTIRETY OF OUR SCIENCE GUILD, ALONG WITH THEIR THINKING MACHINES, FOCUSED MAINLY ON POSSIBLE NEFARIOUS ACTIONS. WE FAILED TO THINK BROADLY ENOUGH, MAJESTOR...

UNTIL EARLIER TODAY.

AND NOW WE KNOW...AND KNOW THAT WE KNOW TOO LATE.

I FAILED YOU, AND NOW THE EMPIRE IS LOST.

PREPARE SOMETHING I CAN SHARE WITH THE COUNCIL...

AND WE ARE NOT DONE *YET*, MENTOR. WE ARE ***SHI'AR.***

WE FIGHT TO THE VERY END.

LATER.

HONOR IS A FRAGILE THING IN TIMES OF WAR.

LESS THAN ONE STANDARD YEAR AGO, WE SET ASIDE THE DESIRES OF OUR INDIVIDUAL EMPIRES TO STAND TOGETHER AGAINST THE BUILDER THREAT.

VICTORY WAS COSTLY, BUT A PRICE WE WOULD READILY PAY AGAIN TO AVOID THE FALL OF OUR PEOPLES.

ONE OF OUR DEBTS--PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE--IS OWED TO THE HUMANS WHO PROVED TO BE THE CATALYST FOR OUR TRIUMPH--THE AVENGERS.

MY FELLOW WARRIORS, WE MUST WAR AGAIN. ONE LAST TIME.

AND IT SEEMS THAT THE DEBT OWED TO THEM WILL BE ONE FOREVER UNPAID...

AS IT IS EARTH WE MUST DESTROY.

EARTH-1610.

City, can you please confirm that we are at the incursion location?

Yes, Maker. Confirmed.

Incursion in three minutes.

Maker?

Yes?

Before the incursion wall prevents communication, I'd like to make a query.

Go ahead.

Why haven't you re-engineered the Children to assist you in saving your world?

I've calculated multiple scenarios in which their existence presents a probability storm of favorable outcomes.

All things in time, City.

Besides...

What father--upon losing a child--responds to that grief by attempting to re-create what's been lost?

No. This world is simply not yet worthy of our shining city full of perfect children.

Soon, though...

Ah!

Blue.

YOU...YOU *DARE?*

YOU DARE TO THINK YOU COULD KILL ME WITH A *KNIFE?*

NO. I JUST PUT THE BLADE WHERE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO.

THAT'S NOT WHAT'S GOING TO KILL YOU.

OH! BLACK BOLT. WHAT ARE--

FAREWELL!

THAT WAS NAMOR.

I SAW HIM LEAVE--FLY OFF-- IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT.

HE FLED?

I DID NOT SAY THAT, TERRAX-- I DON'T KNOW. I LOST SIGHT OF--

OF COURSE HE RAN. HE'S BEEN WAITING HIS ENTIRE LIFE FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT.

HE'S A *RUNNER.*

I COULD *ASK HIM,* MY LORD.

IF YOU WISH IT.

YES, CORVUS.

ASK.

THAT WAS NO SMALL FALL, ATLANTEAN...BUT I HAVE SEEN YOU SUFFER MUCH WORSE WITHOUT SCAR.

WHY THEN DO I SMELL BLOOD ON YOU, NAMOR?

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU *RAN?*

I...I... DON'T RUN...

AND I DON'T ANSWER TO YOU.

THEN ANSWER TO ME.

I...

I...I SAW...

I SAW SOMETHING. IN THE SKY. *THERE.*

SO I WENT TO CHECK WHAT IT WAS...

AND NOW I KNOW.

IT'S SOME KIND OF SHIELD GENERATOR. IMPENETRABLE. THAT'S WHY I FELL...INJURED. I...I TRIED TO BREAK THROUGH IT AND COULD NOT.

IT MUST BE THE WORK OF T'CHALLA, RICHARDS AND THE OTHERS. THEY HAVE TRAPPED US HERE, AND WE ARE MEANT TO DIE ALONG WITH THIS WORLD.

MY AX CAN CLEAVE *ATOMS*--I WILL CUT THROUGH THIS SHIELD.

NO. THIS IS A TRAP. ONE WELL CONSTRUCTED.

BRUTE STRENGTH HAS NEVER DEFEATED REAL FORESIGHT...THIS WILL DEMAND SOMETHING MORE. AT LEAST WE HAVE A WINDOW.

EXACTLY HOW MUCH TIME DO WE HAVE UNTIL THE WORLDS COLLIDE, NAMOR?

IT DOESN'T MATTER! THEY *BUILT* THE ANTI-MATTER BOMBS...

I KNOW THEY CAN DETONATE THEM WHENEVER THEY WISH. SO WE DON'T HA--

GODS. WHAT IS THIS?

06:52:12

07:10:07

SIMTUM. TAPPUTU. A GIFT FROM *RABUM ALAL.*

A *SECOND INCURSION* IS OCCURRING ON THIS WORLD.

THEN IF WE CAN GET THERE...THAT'S OUR WAY OUT.

THEN WE FIND A WAY BACK TO OUR EARTH AND PULL THE SKIN FROM THEIR COWARDLY BONES.

FOUND IT.

IT'S FAR. SIXTEEN HUNDRED KILOMETERS.

WE HAVE TO HURRY.

"I KNOW THAT LOOK. YOU'RE WONDERING...

"WHAT AM I *WAITING* FOR?

"I WANT NAMOR COMPLETELY AWARE OF WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN TO HIM.

"SO WE WILL SPARE HIM A FEW MINUTES.

"BECAUSE I WANT HIM TO KNOW--REALLY KNOW--*IT'S OVER.*

"TO FULLY REALIZE THERE'S NO FORGIVENESS FOR WHAT HE'S DONE.

"THAT THERE IS A PRICE AND HE'S FINALLY GOING TO PAY IT--THAT THERE'S NO MERCY FOR MEN LIKE HIM, AND EVEN IF THERE WAS, HE DOESN'T GET ANY.

"I WANT HIM TO KNOW THIS IS HOW IT ENDS.

"AND MORE THAN THAT...

"I WANT HIM TO KNOW...IT WAS ME."

BREAK

KRAA-SPPLLLAASHH

SOON, SWEET MISTRESS...

BUT NOT YET.

IT...IT WORKED.

YES.

BUT WHAT... WHAT EARTH IS THIS, AND DOES IT PROFIT US TO BE HERE?

CALL ME FOOLISH...

BUT I THINK WE SHOULD ASK HIM.

Well...

Isn't this fascinating.

“BEYONDERS”

NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

"THE IVORY KINGS."

THE WHITE LORDS FROM WILD SPACE.

FROM OUT THERE...

FROM BEYOND...

BEYONDERS.

ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU FOUND OUT THERE, HANK?

SPOTTY AS THEY ARE, THIS DOESN'T LOOK ANYTHING AT ALL LIKE THE "BEYONDER" THAT WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE...

AND THERE'S MORE THAN ONE.

YES... *MORE.*

DRILL DEEP ENOUGH INTO ANY PROBLEM AND YOU'LL FIND BOTH SIMPLICITY AND ELEGANCE. IDEAS ARE LIKE THAT AT THE CORE.

OF COURSE... OF *COURSE* THERE ARE... *MORE.*

ARE WE SURE WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS NOW? I THINK DOCTOR PYM MIGHT NEED TO REST BEF--

DON'T TRY AND HANDLE ME, SON...I CAN HEAR WHAT I SOUND LIKE.

BROKEN DOESN'T MEAN BENT, UNDERSTAND?

SHOW THEM, REED. THE DATA'S ALL RECORDED ON THE CRYSTAL I GAVE YOU.

SHOW THEM....

SEE? UNIVERSALLY ADAPTIVE. HARMONICALLY TRANSITIONAL.

THESE... THINGS CANNOT BE FULLY COMPREHENDED IN A HUMAN FASHION. I COULD TALK ABOUT SCALE, PERHAPS... THE SIZE OF IT...

I COULD TELL YOU ABOUT THE ***CHILD UNIT*** FROM THE ***SECRET WARS.*** VISUALLY MODIFIED TO MIMIC WHAT IT PERCEIVED...

IT CRUNCHED A ***UNIVERSE*** TO MAKE A TOY...BUT THESE THINGS CRUNCH ***UNIVERSES*** AND ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT PLAYING A GAME.

REED AND TONY SENT ME TO FIND RABUM ALAL, BUT I FOUND SOMETHING WORSE. WHITE LORDS OF WILD SPACE, QUESTING FOR THE LAST LIGHT...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND IT NOW?

NOT ONE BIT, HANK.

START AT THE BEGINNING.

"OKAY. WELL, TO START WITH, THE PROBLEM OF FINDING WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WAS TWOFOLD.

"THE FIRST QUESTION I HAD TO ANSWER WAS HOW TO NAVIGATE THE MULTIVERSE.

"REED HAD THEORETICAL IDEAS AND SOME PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE, BUT DIVING THROUGH STACKED UNIVERSES LACKING A TRUE NORTH MAKES IT EASY TO GET LOST.

"INFINITE UNIVERSES MEANS INFINITE TIME, AND TIME WASN'T SOMETHING WE HAD.

"BUT IF YOU GET SMALL ENOUGH, YOU CAN DECIPHER THE STRANGE INTERACTIONS THAT OCCUR IN THE RAZOR-THIN SUBATOMIC SPACES THAT SEPARATE UNIVERSES.

"ROTATING PARTICLES DISAPPEAR AND REAPPEAR AND, FOR THE LONGEST TIME, NO ONE KNEW WHERE THEY WOULD GO, BUT I'LL TELL YOU:

"THEY TRADE PLACES WITH LIKE KIND. CONSTANTLY. SOMETHING AKIN TO AN ESCALATOR MOVING THROUGH REALITIES.

"SO NOW I COULD FIND MY WAY. I HAD MY TRUE NORTH.

"AS FOR THE ANSWER TO MY SECOND QUESTION--

"HOW DO I KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR...

"WITH THAT ONE, I HAD SOME HELP.

"IT TOOK ME ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THREE DAYS OF TRAVELING FROM DOOMED TO DYING WORLDS...

"BUT I EVENTUALLY FOUND MY WAY TO THE SUPERSTATION OF REFUGEE ***BUILDERS*** FROM HUNDREDS OF DEAD UNIVERSES.

"THE PAN-UNIVERSAL ALEPHS, REDESIGNED AND REBUILT BY THE BUILDERS TO HIVE-MIND DATA FROM THOUSANDS OF UNITS, EACH ACTING AS A MULTIVERSAL BUOY.

"TRAWLING THE ENDLESS SEA OF SPACE AND TIME, LOOKING TO SNAG A CELESTIAL CLUE IN THEIR NET.

"I HITCHED A RIDE ON A REPORTING UNIT."

OBJECTIVE: TIME-SENSITIVE.

GOAL: SOURCE-SEEKING.

GOAL: ACHIEVED.

IS THAT SO?

ACTION: UPLOADING COORDINATES.

THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL NEWS...

AS I GROW TIRED OF THIS SEARCHING AND AM EAGER TO CREATE THEIR UNCREATION.

MASTERS! THIS ALEPH SAYS THE HIVE HAS FOUND A SOURCE POINT.

AH! FINALLY.

RECALL ALL UNITS AND PREPARE THE SUPERSTATION FOR TRANSIT.

THE DATA SHOWS THE COORDINATES ARE FAR BEYOND ANY PREVIOUS JUMP.
WITH A WINDOW THIS SLIGHT, PERHAPS WE SHOULD--
I CAN MAKE IT.
THE *NEED* IS THERE...
SO I CAN MAKE THE JUMP.
WHAT?!
THERE WAS ANOTHER MANIFOLD? AND WHAT DID HE MEAN BY, "THE *NEED* IS THERE"?
ACCORDING TO WHAT I COULD FOLLOW FROM THE BUILDERS, ALL MANIFOLDS ARE PRIMAL MOVERS. TELEPORTERS WITH THE BASE ABILITY TO MOVE FROM POINT A TO POINT B...
BUT THEIR REAL VALUE IS IN THE HIGHER END OF THEIR POWER SET--THEY CAN MOVE THINGS ALMOST UNCONSCIOUSLY...
VARIABLE THINGS TO VARIABLE PLACES SOLELY BY *NEED*. THEY SOMEHOW *KNOW* WHERE THINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO GO.
I HAD NO IDEA...BUT THAT EXPLAINS SO...
WAIT. FROM EVERYTHING ELSE I'VE LEARNED, OUR POWER ONLY WORKS IN OUR NATIVE UNIVERSE.
THE BUILDERS BUILT A NEW KIND OF MANIFOLD...
CULTIVATED AND GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FROM HUNDREDS OF... SAMPLES.
THIS ONE COULD TRAVERSE THE MULTIVERSE.
SO... A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT.

"YES. AND A SUCCESSFUL ONE AT THAT.

"THE MANIFOLD MOVED THE SUPERSTATION TO THE COORDINATES.

"AN INCURSION POINT WHERE THE SIDERA MARIS HAD SUMMONED MAPMAKERS.

"A MOMENTARY NEXUS OF REAL AND WILD SPACE...

"I WATCHED FROM THE SUPERSTATION AS ONE THOUSAND NIHILII JOINED WITH TEN THOUSAND ALEPHS TO PIERCE THE NEXUS AND DESTROY THE BULK OF THE MAPMAKERS AND THEIR SIDERA MARIS SLAVES.

"I WATCHED AS THEY SALVAGED A MAPMAKER CORE AND CRACKED THE HARMONIC STRUCTURE OF WILD SPACE.

"I WATCHED AS THEY DISCOVERED THE LOCATION OF THE IVORY KINGS THEMSELVES, AND THE MANUFACTURED MANIFOLD MADE THE JUMP."

THERE. THAT'S WHERE WE *NEED* TO GO.

I CAN FEEL IT.

AND IT WAS HIS LAST...

IT'S NOT MADNESS TO LOOK AT THINGS HIDDEN AND BELIEVE THEY SHOULDN'T BE FOUND.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HANK?

HE'S SAYING THAT IF YOU TRULY WANT TO KEEP SOMETHING A SECRET, YOU DON'T DIG A SHALLOW GRAVE...

YOU BURY IT DEEP.

BRIAN. GOOD.

YOU'RE HERE.

YES. I CAME AS SOON AS SOON AS YOU SIGNALED HIS RETURN.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HANK'S TALKING ABOUT?

HE'S SAYING THERE'S A REASON THAT AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME, EVERY SINGLE BEING CONNECTED TO THESE IVORY KINGS STARTED SHARING THE SAME FREQUENCY...

IT MADE IT EASIER TO FIND THEM IF YOU WERE REALLY LOOKING.

HE'S SAYING IT WAS A TRAP.

"FOUR MONTHS AGO, THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS BEGAN ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING THE COLLAPSE.

"WE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG BEFORE THEN, BUT IT TOOK THE LOSS OF OVER TWENTY CORPSMEN IN A SINGLE WEEK TO TRULY GALVANIZE OUR EFFORTS.

"EVENTUALLY, WE CAPTURED A MAPMAKER AS WELL, BUT INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING THE HARMONICS, SATURNYNE HAD US CONSTRUCT A BEACON.

"THE IVORY KINGS SENT EVERYONE. THE STARLIGHT CITADEL WAS OVERRUN AND THE CORPS WAS DESTROYED IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

"I SHOULD HAVE DIED THERE, BUT AFTER EMBEDDING ME WITH THE CITADEL'S SECRETS, SATURNYNE CAST ME OUT...

"RETURNING ME TO THIS EARTH."

WE NEVER EVEN GLIMPSED AN IVORY KING OR WHATEVER IS BEHIND THIS. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE, THESE THINGS ARE PREDATORS OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

AND THEY WON'T STOP UNTIL THEY HAVE US IN THEIR MOUTHS.

OH, IT'S GRIMMER THAN THAT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHILE I WAS OUT THERE WATCHING, THERE WAS A QUESTION RATTLING AROUND IN MY MIND.

I COULDN'T LET IT GO...

"IF THE BEYONDERS WERE SO POWERFUL--NOT CONSTRAINED BY SPACE, OR ENERGY, OR ANYTHING WITHIN REASON--AND IF THEY WANTED US DEAD...

"WHY HAD THEY NOT SIMPLY FINISHED OFF ALL OF US A LONG TIME AGO? WHAT WAS STOPPING THEM?

"WELL, IT TURNS OUT THE ANSWER WAS WORSE THAN THE QUESTION.

"THAT BAITED TRAP WE FOUND WASN'T MEANT FOR US AT ALL. THEY WERE AFTER BIGGER FISH.

"AND AS FOR WHY IT WAS TAKING AS LONG AS IT DID?

"TURNS OUT IT TAKES A GOOD BIT OF TIME TO KILL AN ENDLESS NUMBER OF GODS.

"WE JUMPED INTO THE NEXUS OF REAL AND WILD SPACE JUST IN TIME TO WATCH A SINGLE BEYONDER CONFRONTING THE LAST CELESTIALS OF THE UNIVERSE WE WERE CURRENTLY IN.

"BUT THE NEXUS WAS THIN SPACE.

"AND AS THEY BATTLED, WHAT DIVIDES ONE REALITY FROM THE NEXT BEGAN TO FADE."

AND LIKE BLURRED, OVERLAPPING VISION, I COULD SEE THE SAME BATTLE TAKING PLACE IN MULTIPLE REALITIES.

"IN EACH ONE, A DIFFERENT BEYONDER FACING...AND ***DESTROYING***...THE CELESTIAL HOST."

THAT EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. WHY THEY DISAPPEARED... AND STOPPED MEETING US...

YES. BUT THE ONLY CONCERN WITH THAT IS WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE THINGS A GOOD DEAL MORE POWERFUL THAN THE CELESTIALS ROAMING THE COSMOS.

TELL US WHAT ELSE YOU SAW, HANK.

THAT'S THE PROBLEM, T'CHALLA...

AT SOME POINT, THE MIND... THE MIND BECOMES INCAPABLE OF FULLY UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT'S OBSERVING...

"I WAITED... DRIFTING IN SPACE...

"AMONG THE LIFELESS BODIES OF THE BUILDERS SUSPENDED IN A ZERO-GRAVITY GRAVE...

"LIKE DROWNED ANTS FLOATING IN WATER.

"AND THEN I SAW...

"I'M NOT SURE *SAW* IS EVEN THE RIGHT WORD...

"BUT I SAW WHAT FOLLOWED...

"AND THAT ONE GLIMPSE CAUSED ME TO LET GO OF THE LOOSE GRIP I HAD ON MY REMAINING SANITY.

"I WENT MAD. LOST IN THE FIREWORKS OF UNIVERSAL GENOCIDE.

"AND I ONLY FOUND MY WAY BACK WHEN ETERNITY FRACTURED.

"SPACE FLATTENED BACK OUT.

"PERCEPTION BECAME POSSIBLE AGAIN.

"THE BEYONDERS TURNED, SOMETHING CATCHING THEIR ATTENTION.

"AND THEN I SAW...

"...WHAT THEY SAW.

"ALL OF REALITY--
THE *MULTIVERSE*--
TAKEN FORM.

"THEY BATTLED.
THEY RAGED.

"THE SAME FIGHT TAKING PLACE ACROSS ALL REALITIES AT THE SAME TIME.

"AND WHEN THE LIVING TRIBUNAL LIVED NO MORE, IT FELL FROM THE HEAVENS...

"AND LANDED ON A ROCK. ONE SLIVER EACH...FOR EACH REALITY.

"THEN I *RAN*, REED.

"I RAN AS HARD AND FAST AS I COULD. I RAN HERE TO TELL YOU..."

...IT'S *OVER*, MY FRIEND. DONE.

THE GODS SPENT BILLIONS OF YEARS TO BUILD SOMETHING... ALL OF THE MULTIVERSE...

AND THESE THINGS DESTROYED IT ON A WHIM.

WHAT HOPE DOES MAN HAVE NOW?

“IT ALL COMES CRASHING DOWN”

FOUR DAYS AGO.
THE MOON.

TONY'S ARCHIVES MARKED *THIS* AS THE PLACE WHERE WE COULD FIND IT, BUT NOTHING IS REGISTERING ON MY--

NO. IT'S HERE. I KNOW IT IS.

I SAW IT FALL.

MAYBE OVER THE NEXT RIDGE.

THERE!

THERE IT IS.

BRADDOCK, THIS IS CHO... WE FOUND THE SITE.

YOU GUYS ARE GOOD TO GO.

OKAY. WE'RE CLEAR TO JUMP...

BUT DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY WE'RE PLAYING *BRING OUT YOUR DEAD?*

THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY TO DO THIS.

MOST PROBLEMS HAVE MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS, CAPTAIN. THAT'S TRUE.

TIME, HOWEVER, DOES A GOOD JOB OF LIMITING OPTIONS.

SO IF WHAT YOU NEED IS A MATERIAL THAT CAN WITHSTAND THE RIGORS OF COLLAPSING MULTIVERSAL SPACE...

AND YOU LACK THE TIME TO FABRICATE IT...

THEN YOU USE WHAT NATURE PROVIDES.

EVEN IF IT'S THE SKIN OFF THE CARCASS OF A DEAD GOD.

THREE DAYS AGO.
NATION X.

HERE AT THE END OF DAYS, IT SEEMS WE'VE ALL BECOME SOMETHING NEW.

I'VE SPENT A GOOD PORTION OF MY LIFE BEING HUNTED BY SENTINELS, BUT NOW THESE WATCH OVER ME.

DO YOU KNOW WHY THAT IS?

I GAVE THEM A NEW PURPOSE.

THAT'S AWESOME, SIR. IT REALLY IS.

I'D EVEN SAY IT'S IMPRESSIVE, BUT THEN AGAIN, I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT WAY ABOUT MOST EVERYTHING YOU DO.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO IMPRESS US ALL, CYCLOPS.

OH...WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S NOT GOING TO BE A PROBLEM, DON'T WE, ROBERTO?

THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE, I TOLD YOU I THOUGHT IT WAS PAST TIME I GOT IN THE GAME.

IT'S CLEAR TO ME NOW THAT YOU FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS...

SINCE NOW YOU WANT ME TO RUN OFF AND PLAY HERO TO MANKIND ONCE AGAIN.

IT AIN'T AN UNREASONABLE REQUEST, SCOTT.

I DON'T THINK SO EITHER.

ISN'T SAVING THE DAY WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO DO?

I SPENT A GOOD PORTION OF MY LIFE BELIEVING THAT, BUT NOW I DON'T.

I SEE THINGS... MORE CLEARLY NOW.

AS THE GAME, ROBERTO, IS *RESURRECTION*...

AND IT IS WELL UNDERWAY.

TWO DAYS AGO.
THE BAXTER BUILDING.

AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH...THE HIGH COSTS THAT HAVE BEEN PAID...

AND THIS WAS THE BEST I COULD DO.

FLEXIBLE CORE. MULTIPLE DRIVES. REDUNDANT SHIELDS... IT'S A FANTASTIC DESIGN, T'CHALLA.

CONSTRUCTION COMES WITH CERTAIN COMPLICATIONS, BUT WE'LL GET IT DONE.

I SIMPLY SOLVED THE PROBLEM YOU PUT IN FRONT OF ME, REED. I FIGURED OUT *HOW NOT TO LOSE.*

WELL, MY FRIEND...YOU KNOW HOW I CAN'T STAND TAKING CREDIT FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS.

AND THIS ONE WASN'T MINE AT ALL...

IT WAS *HERS.*

ANY OTHER CHILD BUT YOURS, REED...

EITHER WAY, LET US HOPE NOT LOSING WILL BE ENOUGH.

IT WILL BE. BUT, YOU KNOW, SOLVE ONE PROBLEM AND ANOTHER POPS UP...

SO THE ONE YOU SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON ISN'T WHETHER OR NOT THE PLAN IS GOING TO WORK...IT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT *DOES.*

WHO ARE YOU GONNA TAKE... AND WHO GETS LEFT BEHIND?

...

IS THERE A CHOICE, REALLY? IT'S A LIFEBOAT. HYPOTHETICALLY, YOU HAVE TO TREAT IT LIKE ONE, DON'T YOU?

IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD.

AND SPACE IS LIMITED, SO MULTIDISCIPLINED CANDIDATES SHOULD TAKE PRIORITY OVER HIGHLY SPECIALIZED ONES.

YES. EXCEPT MAYBE A FEW GENETICISTS.

WE DON'T WANT TO BE LIMITED BY THINGS LIKE BREEDING PAIRS WHEN RESTARTING HUMANITY, SO THEY--AND MATERIAL NEEDS--SHOULD TAKE PREFERENCE.

ARE WE REALLY DOING THIS?

WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE, REED?

WE FAILED TO SAVE OUR WORLD...*ALL* THE WORLDS...

AT THE VERY LEAST WE HAVE TO SAVE OUR *SPECIES.*

ONE DAY AGO.
NEW YORK CITY.

I KNOW THERE'S SOME KIND OF PROTOCOL ABOUT HOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO TALK TO THE PARENTS OF LITTLE KIDS. LIKE TO AVOID HURT FEELINGS AND SUCH, BUT, DUDE...

YOUR DEMON BABY IS STUCK ON THE CEILING.

BABABABA

I WISH I *COULD*, BOBBY, BUT I CAN'T TAKE CREDIT...

HE IS HIS *MOTHER'S* CHILD.

BZZZTTT

HUH?

SAM...I'M GETTING LONG DISTANCE FROM THE EMPIRE. DON'T LET THE BABY FALL OFF THE CEILING.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

ALL RIGHT.
GO, GO, EXOSPECS.
HRRN
N
OH!
GREETINGS, GUARDSMAN.
I WAS NOT EXPECTING A CALL FROM YOU, MAJESTOR. YOU HONOR ME...

HOW CAN I SERVE YOU?

YOU DO SERVE ME, SMASHER.

WELL...AND WITH NO SMALL MEASURE OF DISTINCTION.

BEFORE I WAS MAJESTOR, I WAS PRAETOR OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD. I WAS A WARRIOR BEFORE I WAS AN EMPEROR.

ANY PRESTIGE I HAD, I EARNED ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE. AS SUCH, I VALUE SUCH KINDRED SOULS.

MAJESTOR, I DON'T UNDERST--

I AM RECALLING YOU TO SERVE, SUPERGUARDIAN. READY YOUR FAMILY AND REPORT TO THE FLAGSHIP, LILANDRA.

I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU THERE.

MAJESTOR, NO...I...I...

IT'S SO FAR, AND I NEED MORE TIME TO--

TIME...IS SOMETHING NONE OF US HAVE, SUPERGUARDIAN.

UNDERSTAND...

YOU ARE EXPECTED...AND THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US IS MUCH SMALLER THAN YOU BELIEVE.

EARTH-1610.
THE CITY.

I'VE GIVEN YOU AN ENTIRE DAY, NAMOR.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED IT, AS I WANTED YOU TO WORK THROUGH ALL THE VARIOUS LIES YOU MIGHT TELL...

AND DISCOVER HOW POINTLESS IT WOULD BE TO UTTER THEM. HOW THEY END IN REGRET, AND FALL SHORT OF WHAT GOOD THE TRUTH MIGHT DO YOU.

SO I GAVE YOU A DAY.

IS IT JUST ME, OR DOES THIS FEEL LIKE YOU'RE LEADING UP TO SOMETHING?

WE HAD A DEAL.

YES. WE DID.

AND THEN I THOUGHT I COULD MAKE A BETTER ONE.

BUT IT SEEMS WE WERE BOTH WRONG.

AND ARE WE ALL DONE WITH THAT NOW?

OH... VERY MUCH SO.

I INTEND TO MAKE IT THROUGH THIS. I NEED TO LIVE.

I WILL LIVE.

I AM DONE WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN FORWARD MOTION.

GODS PITY THE WORLDS THAT STAND IN MY WAY.

THE OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM.
THE WARSHIP LILANDAA.

I BEAR THIS BURDEN POORLY AS WELL, ORACLE. BUT THE RELENTLESS SUCKING MAW OF URGENCY NEUTERS ALL PITY. SO IF YOU HAVE A FINAL CASE TO MAKE...

I WOULD HEAR IT NOW.

THEN HEAR ME CLEARLY, MAJESTOR.

WE *CANNOT* DO THIS...

THESE ARE OUR ALLIES--NOT OUR ENEMIES. HOW CAN YOU FORGET THAT THEY RECENTLY SAVED US ALL?

UPON HONOR WE BUILT ALL THAT WE ARE. WHAT ARE WE SHI'AR IN THE FACE OF LOSING IT?

MENTOR... ORACLE APPEALS TO OUR IMPERIAL HONOR.

IT DOES NOT FALL ON DEAF EARS.

THE RECORD IS CLEAR. I HAVE NOT HIDDEN IT.

THE FAULT OF ALL THIS IS MINE...I MISSED THE SIGNS AND THEN I LEARNED TOO LATE WHAT THEY MEANT.

THE DISHONOR--THE SHAME--FALLS TO ME. BUT THAT FAILING HAS LEFT US NO OTHER CHOICE.

THE PLANET MUST BE DESTROYED... AND WHEN IT IS ASH AND WE HAVE SAVED WHAT WE HAVE BUILT, THEN I WILL PAY WHAT I OWE AND FALL ON MY SWORD...

IT WILL BE...AN HONOR.

THAT KIND OF BLINDING NOBILITY SERVES ONLY THE BLIND.

THIS IS WRONG. WE CANNOT-- WE MUST NOT-- *DESTROY THE EARTH.*

I KNOW YOU, GLADIATOR. I HAVE KNOWN YOU SINCE LONG BEFORE YOU WERE MAJESTOR... AND YOU WILL NOT DO THIS...

YOU ARE TOO GOOD A MAN.

WHO I AM.....IS BOUND BY *WHAT* I AM.

I AM AN *EMPIRE.*

AND THAT EMPIRE MUST STAND AT ANY COST.

VESSELS ARRIVING IN SYSTEM.

MULTIPLE VECTORS.

AND NOW, IT SEEMS, WE ARE DONE WITH THE FANTASY OF IDYLLIC ENDINGS...

"FOR THE MACHINES OF WAR HAVE ASSEMBLED."

I'M NOT HEARING ANYTHING BUT STATIC.

STILL NOTHING BUT STATIC.

LEMME CHECK AGAIN. MAYBE THIS TIME...*NOPE.* STATIC.

HOW ABOUT YOU, GAMORA?

I ALSO HEAR ONLY STATIC, PETER QUILL.

IT'S SO *WEIRD* BECAUSE ROCKET SAID-- *EMPHATICALLY*-- THAT HE COULD--

ALL RIGHT, SHUT UP ALREADY!

ANYONE *ELSE* ON THIS SHIP ABLE TO PATCH INTO THE ENCRYPTED SECURITY NETWORK OF NOT ONE BUT *FIVE* GALACTIC EMPIRES? OF COURSE NOT.

BUT AM I APPRECIATED? *NOOOOO.*

I AM CONFUSED BY THIS ERRATIC AND DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR. IF YOU WANT TO *DESTROY* THIS MACHINE YOU SHOULD USE A BIGGER--

OKAY! TRY IT NOW!

--ADVISED THAT THE STRIKE WINDOW WILL OPEN IN FOURTEEN CYCLES. ALL SHIPS ARE ADVISED TO PROCEED UNDER MAXIMUM BURN TO THE SECONDARY STAGING AREA SURROUNDING THE WORLD. PLANETCIDE PROTOCOLS ENACTED.

THAT AIN'T GOOD.

ILL INTENT IS ONE THING. OVERWHELMING FORCE A SECOND.

BUT THE *TREACHERY* OF THIS... SNEAK ATTACK. LOATHSOME.

WELL, I GUESS WE KNOW WHAT WE NEED TO DO THEN, DON'T WE?

I AM GROOT.

WARN EARTH? *WARN EARTH?*

ABSOLUTELY FREAKING NOT!

IT'S LIKE THERE'S A GIANT SIGN SAYING: *STAY AWAY!* THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE--FIRE, UNDERSTAND?

FIRE.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY CALL PEOPLE WHO RUN TOWARDS FIRE INSTEAD OF *AWAY* FROM IT?

I'LL TELL YOU...

IDIOTS.

THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE. A BUNCH OF STUPID, FREAKING IDIOTS.

WE RISK OUR TAILS TO COME HERE AND TELL YOU TO GET THE HELL OFF YOUR PLANET BECAUSE SOMEONE'S COMING TO SMASH IT INTO BITS, AND WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE SAY?

"NO, THANK YOU, WE'RE GOING DOWN WITH THE SHIP."

YOU KNOW WHO GOES DOWN WITH THE SHIP?

"IDIOTS."

“RABUM ALAL”

EARTH-1903990.

THERE IIIIIIT IIIIIIS.

A DOOR.

A DOOR TO OTHER WORLDS.

HURRY. HURRY...

SUMMON THE EYE...TELL HIIIIIM WHAT WE HAVE SEEN.

AH!

EYE OF EYES. LOOK!

A SCOUT RETURNS, AND IIIIT APPEARS WE HAVE SEEN A GLORIIIIOUS THIIIIIING.

TOO MANY CLOUDS OF LATE. TOO FEW RAYS OF HOPE...

I AM UNABLE TO FULLY COMPREHEND THE HIVE MIND OF THE PRIESTHOOD, SO FORGIVE ME IF I RESERVE JUDGMENT REGARDING....

GREAT EYE...

WE HAVE FOUND A DOOR TO THE LIIIIIBRARY OF WORLDS.

UNMARKED?

UNGUARDED?

NO.

THREE BLACK SIIIISTERS STAND WATCH.

DAMN.

AND HOW LONG DO WE HAVE UNTIL THIS EARTH COLLIDES WITH--

THIIIIS WORLD WIIIILL UNDERGO IIIITS IIIIINCURSIIIION IIIIN LESS THAN ONE UNIIIIT OF STANDARD CELESTIIIIAL TIIIIME.

THEN WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, DO WE?

SEND EVERYONE...

"TAKE THE DOOR."

AAIIIIIEE!

BLACK PRIESTS!

SISTER! JUST LIKE OLD TIMES...

THEY'VE COME FOR THE DOOR.

NO! NEVER BEFORE LIKE THIS...

THEY'VE SENT TOO MANY-- POSSIBLY ALL.

GO! SEAL THE DOOR!

"I WILL HOLD THEM BACK AS LONG AS I CAN."

HURRY, SISTER! HURR--

AAIIEEE!

THOOOOOOMM!

TOO LATE.

LOCKED AND SEALED UP TIIIIGHT.

WE TARRIIIIED, EYE OF EYES... WE WERE TOO SLOW.

A LOCKED DOOR ISN'T MY CONCERN...

I'M WORRIED THAT ONE OF THEM ESCAPED.

WE ARE MANY. THEY ARE FEW.

STILL, ALL THE OTHER WORLDS OUR ORDER HAD MARKED OVER THE YEARS AS HAVING DOORS TO THE LIBRARY HAVE BEEN LOST TO INCURSIONS...

JUST LIKE THIS ONE SOON WILL BE. SO, ABOUT THAT LOCKED DOOR?

YES, EYE...

OVER THE YEARS, I'VE LEARNED ANY JOURNEY INTO AN UNKNOWN REALM IS FULL OF PERIL.

AND NO PRIEST HAS EVER SET FOOT INSIDE THE LIBRARY DOOR...

I WOULD RATHER THEY NOT KNOW WE ARE COMING.

GOOD FORTUNE TO HAVE A KEY.

PSSSHHHH!

SO MANY DOORS...

SO MANY PATHS FROM WHIIIICH TO CHOOSE...

GREAT EYE, HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE TO GO?

THE SWANS SERVE THEIR MASTER, AND THAT IS WHO WE SEEK...

THE GREAT DESTROYER--RABUM ALAL.

AND JUST AS WE BELIEVED, THE LIBRARY APPEARS VAST. ALMOST BEYOND COMPREHENSION.

BUT AS WE HAVE WITNESSED WITH OUR OWN EYES, THESE SWANS ARE FERVENT...THEY WORSHIP...

AND ALL HOLY THINGS MUST BE REVERED. AH!

THERE. THAT IS THE WAY MOST TRAVELED.

THAT IS THE PATH TO THEIR LIEGE...

AND THE ONE WE MUST FOLLOW.

IT'S AMAZING, REALLY. EACH ONE OF THESE ROOMS...FULL OF SOME STRANGE WONDER.

WE KNOW THESE. LONG-LOST SENTIIIIENT KEEPERS OF EXOTIIIIC KNOWLEDGE.

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN CAPTURED, CATALOGED AND STORED.

OF COURSE! IT DOES REASON THAT THE LIBRARY WOULD BE AN ACTUAL...*AHEM*, LIBRARY.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THESE ARE?

LIIIVIIIIING REPOSIIITORIIIIES OF IIIINFORMATIIIION. HARDDRIIIIVES COMPOSED ENTIIIIIIRELY OF LIIIIIGHT.

STAY ALERT.

WE'VE REACHED AN INTERSECTION OF BRANCHING WORLDS.

THE FOOTSTEPS ARE BECOMING MORE DENSE...

I BELIEVE WE ARE GETTING CLOSER

BE PREPARED FOR--

OH! THERE... IN THE NEXT CHAMBER...

"A SWAN."

=HURK!=

=HURK!=

You are in the void, priest. A vacuum.

This is a quiet room, and there are NO WORDS here.

WHETHER IT'S THE WHITE PATH OF ILLUMINATION OR THE DARK ARTS OF THE MOST MIDNIGHT HOUR...

THE FIRST THING YOU LEARN ABOUT MAGIC IS PRECISION.

IT'S LIKE ANY OTHER SCIENCE, REALLY...

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS.

YES, I AM THE GREAT EYE OF THE BLACK PRIESTS.

AND *THE WORDS*, WHICH I HAVE SO RECENTLY MASTERED, NOW FAIL ME AS THEY DO THEM.

BUT I AM ALSO THE *SORCERER SUPREME...*

A MASTER OF MANY THINGS.

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE LEARNING THE MINUTIA OF MYSTICISM.

RITUALS. LOST LANGUAGES.

SYMBOLS OF POWER.

SPIRITS. INCANTATIONS. PRINCIPALITIES.

AND THE MUCH DARKER THINGS.

BUT ALL OF IT-- THE ART, THE UNDERSTANDING, THE CONTROL-- IT ALL RELIES ON *PRECISION.*

THERE IS AN ORDER THAT MUST BE ADHERED TO.

AND URGENCY... DESPERATION... THESE THINGS DEFEAT ORDER.

THEY BRING CHAOS.

AND *CHAOS...*

IT BRINGS THE FALL.

LATER.

UHHHHHH...

WUH...

WHAT... WHERE...

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

WHERE DO YOU THINK, NECROMANCER?

EXACTLY WHERE YOUR RUINOUS WAYS END...

FEIGN REVERENCE.

KNOW TERROR.

FOR YOU GO NOW TO SEE *RABUM ALAL*.

OUR MASTER IS MERCILESS, AND THIS IS THE PATH TO OBLIVION_

WE CAN GO NO FURTHER, PRIEST.

WHAT DID THEY MEAN... THEY CAN GO NO FURTHER?

NO *SEEING* SWAN CAN WITHSTAND THE BLINDING LIGHT OF THE GREAT DESTROYER...

YES... MANY YEARS AGO, I LEFT THE FLOCK AND DUG OUT MY EYES WITH MY OWN HANDS SO THAT I MIGHT SERVE AT HIS FEET...

RABUM ALAL SAYS ONLY THE BLIND CAN WITHSTAND THE BRILLIANCE OF THE SUN.

AND WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU CALL HIM--THE ONE ALL THINGS ORBIT...

YOU SHOULD KNOW, THERE IS NO ARCHIVE IN HIS GREAT LIBRARY THAT IS HIDDEN FROM HIS TERRIBLE GAZE...

AND THE ONLY REASON YOU LIVE WHILE THE OTHER PRIESTS DO NOT IS THAT YOU, NECROMANCER, CAUGHT HIS EYE.

HE DEMANDED THAT YOU BE BROUGHT BEFORE HIM...AND SO WE HAVE DONE HIS BIDDING...

FAREWELL, FOOLISH MAN... I HOPE HE BURNS THE SKIN FROM YOUR TRESPASSING BONES.

HELLO?

ENTER.

IN ALL THE WORLDS, IN ALL THE UNIVERSES...

I WOULD NEVER HAVE EXPECTED TO SEE *YOU* HERE.

HELLO, STEPHEN...

IT'S BEEN FAR TOO LONG.

MY GOD...

DOOM? HOW IS THIS...

YOU'RE RABUM ALAL?

I AM.

I'VE BUILT A RELIGION...AND IT HAS STOKED A GRAND FIRE WITHIN ME.

ONE HOT ENOUGH AND WELL SUITED FOR THE TASK AT HAND.

WE'RE READY FOR WAR, STEPHEN.

I HAVE DISCIPLES, BUT I ALWAYS HAVE ROOM FOR MORE...

YOU REMEMBER OWEN REECE?

THE MOLECULE MAN. YES.

HE IS AN ORACLE FOR THE TIMES.

ALL THE PIECES ARE COMING TOGETHER.

ALL THE THINGS WE'VE BUILT WILL SOON BE CRUMBLING DOWN.

BECAUSE THEY'RE OUT THERE...WAITING. THE IVORY KINGS. THE BEYONDERS...

AND HOW CAN WE DEFEAT THEM? WE COGS IN THEIR WELL-OILED APOCALYPSE MACHINE?

"FOR IT TAKES A GOD TO KILL A GOD."

“THE FALL OF GODS”

THE REMAINS OF EARTH-1120006.
A SHATTERED MAPMAKER WORLD.

WE DON'T HAVE LONG HERE.

STARS ARE COLLAPSING, SUNS ARE DYING...

WE'RE NEARING THE LAST GASP OF THIS UNIVERSE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO INCREASE THE RATE OF DECAY--I'M SURE SOME ACCELERATION WAS INEVITABLE--BUT WHATEVER REASON IS BEHIND THE WHY...

...IT'S DISRUPTING THE MAPPING SYSTEM THE IVORY KINGS CREATED. THIS IS, WHAT, THE *TENTH* NONFUNCTIONAL MAPMAKER WE'VE FOUND?

YES, NIGHTMASK, BUT WHAT GOOD IS--

A MAP?

DELVE DEEP, ABYSS--YOU TELL US.

AHHHHHH...NO WONDER WE COULDN'T FIND THEM. THEY'RE NOT HERE IN THE SAME SENSE WE ARE...

LIKE MUSIC PLAYING AT A FREQUENCY JUST BEYOND OUR ABILITY TO HEAR.

LET ME SHOW YOU...

SHLK

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE...

AND, NOW, *THAT'S* WHERE WE'RE GOING.

IT SEEMS THERE IS A WAY OUT OF THE WOODS, BROTHER. THEY'VE FOUND IT.

YES.

BUT CAN THE TWO OF YOU GET US THERE?

I CAN FIND THE WAY... I CAN POINT US THERE, BUT...

YES. I CAN DO IT.

ADAM...

WE HAVE TO GET THERE-- NOW--FOR IT TO MATTER. SO THERE ISN'T ANY CHOICE, REALLY...

EVEN IF THERE WAS, I WOULDN'T CHANGE MY MIND.

HOW MANY YEARS? HOW MUCH WILL IT COST THIS TIME?

MANY. STILL, IT HAS TO BE DONE.

I'M READY IF YOU ARE.

VERY WELL...

DO IT.

NRRGGGGGHHH!

EX NIHILO BUILT ADAM TO BE THE PERFECT HUMAN...

A FABRICATED PRODUCT OF A LIFE-CREATING SYSTEM.

EVEN BETTER THAN THE REAL THING.

THE LAST WHITE EVENT CHANGED ADAM INTO SOMETHING MORE--A NIGHTMASK CAPABLE OF NAVIGATING THE DREAMSPACE OF HUMAN POTENTIAL.

BUT THE COST OF THIS POWER IS TEMPORAL REGRESSION--A GRADUAL RETURN TO HIS PREFABRICATED, PRIMORDIAL STATE.

THIS IS BELIEVED TO BE A FLAW--SOME ACCIDENTAL GLITCH IN ONE OF THE UNIVERSAL SYSTEMS THAT MADE HIM WHAT HE IS.

BUT THAT'S A SIMPLE, MICROSCOPIC WAY OF LOOKING AT A MUCH BROADER DILEMMA.

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

HERE AT THE END TIMES, THEY'RE *ALL* BROKEN SYSTEMS.

HE'S GONE!

AND WE ARE LOST IN A SEA OF DARKNESS. WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

NOT TOTAL DARKNESS, ODINSON. THERE...A SLIVER OF LIGHT. I CAN BARELY SEE IT, BUT--

FWASSHHH

We are Beyond.

Dreamers. Destroyers. All of reality our whim.

Who dares stand before us?

GODS, LEGENDS... THE VERY BEST OF HEROES. YOU FACE *AVENGERS* THIS DAY...

WHO DARES STAND BEFORE *US?*

Two.

Two will stand.

INTERLOPERS...

YOU ARE SENTIENT AND THEREFORE CAPABLE OF COMPREHENSION. SO KNOW THIS...

THIS IS NOT YOUR PLACE. YOU ARE NOT WELCOME HERE.

FOR WE ARE ***BEYOND***. BEYOND UNDERSTANDING. BEYOND ACQUIESCENCE. BEYOND JUSTICE.

WE ARE BEYOND YOU.

THERE IS A GRAND EXPERIMENT UNDERWAY, AND YOUR ENCROACHING IS AN IRRITANT.

RUN... WHILE YOU STILL CAN.

WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER IF HE BE UNWORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THORR

OUR WORLD--ALL WORLDS--ARE DYING...

I DO NOT RUN, BUT EVEN IF I DID, THERE IS NO SAFE PLACE TO RUN TO.

YOU NEED TO STOP THIS... EXPERIMENT, AS IT HAS HAD UNFORESEEN, AND TERRIBLE, CONSEQUENCES.

UNFORESEEN? THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS...

WE ARE THE VERY CAUSE OF IT.

THEN STOP.

NOW.

AND HOW COULD WE DO THAT?

THE EXPERIMENT ISN'T FINISHED YET.

YES... IT IS!

THOOOOM!

SUCH IMPATIENCE...

CAN YOU NOT REALIZE THE QUICKEST WAY FOR THIS TO END IS FOR US TO COMPLETE WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO?

EXTINCTION IS INEVITABLE. THE SOONER IT OCCURS--

--THE SOONER THIS WILL ALL BE OVER.

DON'T HESITATE!

WE'RE ONLY GOING TO GET ONE CHANCE AT THIS-- THROW EVERYTHING YOU HAVE AT THEM.

EX NIHILO! I CAN SEE WHAT THEY ARE!

THE FORMS THEY TAKE ARE MANIFESTATIONS-- SOLID STATES CONTAINING THEIR VERY ESSENCE.

I UNDERSTAND, SISTER.

EX NIHIL!!...

"THEY CAN CHANGE...

"TAKE NEW FORMS...

"BECOME SOMETHING DIFFERENT...

"WE CAN HELP THIS ONE..."

WHAT ARE YOU ATTEMPTING TO--

HRNNNN.

"HELP IT BECOME SOMETHING BETTER..."

THE EX NIHILII HAVE FULLY VISUALIZED THE BEYONDER'S CURRENT FORM.

SOLID. AND THEREFORE ITS MOST MALLEABLE STATE.

HELP ME, SISTER.

HELP ME RESHAPE IT...

...AS WE HAVE RESHAPED WORLDS.

WHAT IN THE...

IT COST EVERYTHING, THIS ONE LAST ACT OF CREATION.

YES. BUT LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE MADE...

IMAGING THAT... ONE LAST GARDEN-- A PERFECT LIVING THING, IN SUCH A COLD AND UNFORGIVING PLACE.

"IT'S A GOOD ENOUGH END."

THEY'RE GONE...

AND THEY LEFT A FREAKING TREE. SUPER.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WE'RE CONDUCTING AN EXPERIMENT OF OUR OWN, YOU HEARTLESS DEVIL...

AND OURS IS HALFWAY DONE!

HRRRPHH!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF...THE *SIGNIFICANCE* OF US?

SHKRIPP!

AARRGHHHHH!

THE COST OF OUR LIFE COMPARED TO YOUR OWN?

HYPERION! IS THOR OKAY?

IS HE--

STARBRAND! LOOK OUT!

WHU--

HURK!

YOU... YOU'VE...

STABBED ME THROUGH...

OH, GOD... YOU'VE KILLED ME.

DAMN THING IS FASTER THAN I THOUGHT.

YEAH, WELL...FAST IS ONE THING...

FAST AS LIGHT, ANOTHER...

LOOK HERE, MONSTER.

I AM THE SUN.

FOOLISH CREATURE.

I CREATE STARS...

UHHHHH...

I DESTROY THEM...

WHAT MAKES YOU ANY DIFFERENT?

AARRGGGGGHH!

RAAARRR!

HUUHHH...

YOU WANT TO KILL HIM... KILL US ALL? KILL EVERYTHING? THEN I WILL GO FIRST... BUT I WILL NOT GO QUIETLY.

FASCINATING. YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WIN...

YET YOU HOLD TIGHT TO THIS IDEA OF RESISTANCE.

CAN'T...

CONTAIN...

CLARNNGGG!

HOW POINTLESS.

ARRGHHHHHHH!

HOW HOPELESS.

I NEVER WANTED THIS...

I JUST WANTED TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE. POWERLESS AND SMALL.

AND NOW YOU'VE KILLED ME UNIVERSES AWAY FROM MY HOME. I NEVER LEARNED TO LIVE WITH WHAT I BECAME...

AND HERE AT THE END, I CAN'T EVEN CONTAIN IT.

"WHAT A CROCK OF--"

HE DID IT.

WE WON.

I THINK... I THINK WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET.

THE FISSURE.

THEIR EXPERIMENT CONTINUES...

WE'LL FIND A WAY TO CLOSE THE DOOR--REPAIR THE DAMAGE.

HEALING BEGINS WITH CLOSING THE WOUND, NO?

IT'S A DEEP CUT, HYPERION...THIS WILL TAKE SOME TIME...

BUT DID YOU SEE THE LOOK ON THAT MONSTER'S FACE WHEN HE REALIZED THAT--

OH, NO...

THOR!

"LOOK...

"MORE OF THEM...

"MUCH MORE."

WE'RE GOING TO DIE HERE TODAY.

AYE...

BUT LET IT BE ON OUR TERMS.

ONE MORE TIME. OUR VERY...

HUURGGGG!

...BEST.

WHOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER IF THEY BE UNWORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF

THOR

HA! HA! HA! HA!

SO BE IT.

IF THIS IS THE END, LET ME NOT MEET IT AS *THE UNWORTHY*... BUT AS MY FATHER'S SON.

THE OCCASION DEMANDS I OFFER YOU A DRINK, HYPERION, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE NONE.

THAT'S BECAUSE WE DRANK IT ALL, BROTHER.

YES. WE DID.

NOTHING LEFT TO DO NOW BUT THE OTHER THING.

I JUST WANT TO SAY...

FOR SOME TIME I BELIEVED I SURVIVED THE DEATH OF TWO WORLDS-- NOW I KNOW IT JUST TOOK A WHILE TO CATCH UP WITH ME.

IT'S A DARK THING, WHAT MY LIFE BECAME... YOU HAVE MADE IT ***BETTER,*** ODINSON.

WILL YOU WAIT FOR ME IN VALHALLA?

BROTHER...

THIS DAY, I WILL ***RACE*** YOU THERE.

AGAINST THE BLEAK NOTHING OF DEAD SPACE, TWO GODS FELL TO MANY.

THE SUN SHONE ONE LAST TIME.

THERE WAS LIGHTNING. AND THUNDER...

AND THEN SILENCE.

“IN LATVERIA, THE
FLOWERS DIE IN SUMMER”

THE WAY IS **DOWN,** VICTOR...

I'VE BUILT YOUR DOOR, MISTER REECE...

CAN YOU SHOW US THE WAY NOW THAT I'VE OPENED IT?

YES.

YOU WANTED TO SEE WHERE IT STARTED...WELL, HERE IT IS, VICTOR...

OR DO YOU NEED TO SEE IT MORE CLEARLY?

"HERE IS A STORY..."

"DO YOU WANT TO HEAR A STORY?

ALL THE WAY DOWN.

BACK.

BACK TO THE VERY START OF IT...

TO THE BROKEN MIRROR...

WHERE THE END OF EVERYTHING BEGAN...

AND HERE WE ARE.

YES. THIS PLACE IS WHERE YOU BECAME THE MOLECULE MAN.

A LONG AND TWISTED TALE IT IS, MISTER REECE... BUT DOOM KNOWS *YOUR STORY*.

YOU *KNOW?* WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW?

SOME SECONDHAND ACCOUNT THAT BECAME AN ORIGIN IN THE TELLING-- AN ACCEPTED NARRATIVE MAGICALLY ENCAPSULATING ALL THAT I WAS AND WHAT YOU THINK I BECAME?

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL, VICTOR VON DOOM. BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS...

I AM RETURNED HERE WHOLE AGAIN.

ALL OF US.

DISPLACEMENT-- TEMPORAL OR NOT-- SHOULD NOT RESULT IN THIS...

THE PSYCHOTIC WILDNESS...THE HYSTERICAL CHATTER...

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MADNESS, MISTER REECE?

NOTHING YET.

WATCH.

YOU'RE A MAN OF BOTH SCIENCE AND MAGIC, VICTOR.

THE NATURAL AND UNNATURAL...

QUITE THE DICHOTOMY, AND THE ONE PERSON PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF FULLY COMPREHENDING WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU.

I AM NOT A MAN. NOT THE WAY THAT MOST PEOPLE UNDERSTAND "BEING HUMAN."

HERE WE ARE NOW--NOT ONLY HAVE WE FALLEN BACK IN TIME TO MY SO-CALLED ORIGIN, BUT WE ARE IN ANOTHER UNIVERSE ALL TOGETHER.

NATURAL AND UNNATURAL.

A MACHINE OF GREAT SCIENCE... AND THE MAGIC ON WHICH IT RUNS...

THAT MAN THERE...HE IS NOT ME, AND YET...

HE IS ME.

HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND IT YET.

OF COURSE NOT. EXPLAINING IT ISN'T ENOUGH.

NO. WE HAVE TO SHOW HIM.

ARE YOU READY?

DO YOU REMEMBER--BEFORE THIS MOMENT--WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER. SEVEN, I THINK...

IT WAS SPRING AND WE WERE CHASING A FRIEND THROUGH THE WOODS. THERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL WHITE FLOWER GROWING BESIDE A LARGE OAK TREE. IT CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION...

WE STOPPED RUNNING SO WE COULD LEAN DOWN AND SMELL IT.

I AM NOT THAT SMELL, OR THE BIRDS CHIRPING...OR ANY OTHER SOUND OF THE FOREST. I AM THE LIGHT PERFECTLY HITTING THE FLOWER.

BITS OF DUST HEATED BY THE SUN, SWIMMING IN THE AIR ABOVE IT.

IT WAS A CHERISHED MEMORY.

EVERYTHING IS LOSS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SENDING A MESSAGE.

AURR GHH HH!

NOW THAT MEMORY IS GONE... FOREVER...

AND NOW, VICTOR, YOUR...ORIGIN-- MUCH LIKE MINE-- IS A FICTION THAT WILL BECOME ACCEPTED AS REAL.

BUT THIS IS THE ONLY TIME WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS TOGETHER. FROM NOW ON, IT'S GOING TO BE UP TO YOU.

IF YOU DON'T... THEY'LL NEVER CALL YOU THE GREAT DESTROYER. WILL THEY, VICTOR?

THEY?

EVERYONE.

THE FALLEN. THE VICTIMS OF DYING WORLDS. YOUR FAITHFUL. AND MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE...

YOUR ENEMIES.

COME. I'LL SHOW YOU.

THIS IS THE LIBRARY OF WORLDS. A CONDUIT BETWEEN UNIVERSES BUILT BY THE BEYONDERS WHEN THEY STILL BELIEVED "LIFE" TO BE A VALUABLE EXPERIMENT.

THE LIBRARY EXISTS IN A VERSION OF THE SAME UNOBSERVABLE SPACE THE BEYONDERS WATCH THE MULTIVERSE FROM. AS SUCH, FROM HERE YOU TOO WILL BE UNOBSERVABLE...

BOTH TO THE WORLDS, AND TO THEM.

IF THERE IS ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED FROM THE CONQUEST OF COWARDS, IT'S THAT ONE CANNOT HIDE FOREVER.

OH, YOU WON'T BE HIDING...AND YOU'RE RIGHT, EVENTUALLY YOU WILL BE FOUND...

BUT THAT WILL BE BY AN OLD FRIEND. OUR CONCERN--YOUR ***SOLE*** CONCERN--IS THE IVORY KINGS THEMSELVES. YOU MUST STOP ***THE BEYONDERS.***

FROM DOING WHAT EXACTLY?

"CONDUCTING THEIR GRANDEST OF GRAND EXPERIMENTS. ***THE SIMULTANEOUS DEATH OF EVERYTHING IN THE MULTIVERSE.***

"YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE CHILD BEYONDER? IT DESTROYED A UNIVERSE IN ORDER TO CONSTRUCT A PLAY WORLD OUT OF THE ASHES...

"***THESE*** ARE ITS BETTERS, WITH FAR MORE AMBITIOUS GOALS..."

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT ***I*** AM?

I AM THEIR BOMB.

"ALL BEINGS EXIST IN VARIOUS STATES ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE. IN ONE REALITY PERHAPS YOU WERE A POET, IN ANOTHER A BEGGAR, IN ANOTHER A GOOD MAN.

"YOU ARE SOMEWHAT UNIQUE IN THAT THERE ARE LESS OF YOU THAN THERE SHOULD BE--THE RESULT OF A GREAT CULLING OF DOOMS.

"STILL, WHAT FEW OF YOU REMAIN ARE ALL TO SOME DEGREE... DIFFERENT.

"I AM NOT. I WAS CONSTRUCTED AS A SINGULAR BEING ACROSS ALL OF SPACE AND TIME. AN OLD EXPERIMENT OF SHARED MINDS.

"A SINGLE CONSCIOUSNESS SHARED THROUGHOUT ALL MY INFINITE SELVES.

"THE MOMENT YOU SAW EARLIER--MY ORIGIN--WAS A BIT OF CELESTIAL MAGIC...THE CHARGING OF THE BOMB. AND IT HAPPENED SIMULTANEOUSLY ACROSS ***EVERY*** REALITY."

THEY LIT MY FUSE, AND NOW I--ALL OF ME--AM TERMINAL. AND WHEN I DIE...I'LL TAKE *MY UNIVERSE* WITH ME.

AND THEY WANT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ALL GO OFF AT ONCE.

BUT THAT ISN'T WHAT OCCURRED. YOU DIED AND NOTHING HAPPENED.

SURE IT DID. BUT THAT ME--ONE OF AN INFINITE NUMBER OF ME'S--DIED EARLY. FIRST, IN FACT.

IF WE'RE GOING TO THWART THEIR PLAN, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL A WHOLE LOT MORE OF ME...

AND SOON.

I'M NOT EVEN SURE I FIND ANY OF THIS BELIEVABLE.

YOU WILL. WHEN YOU REACH A HIGH ENOUGH THRESHOLD, YOU'LL START SEEING SOME REAL RESULTS FROM YOUR WORK.

THE BLUE AND RED SHIFT OF INCURSIONS.

HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE UNTIL YOU REACH YOUR FINAL TERMINAL STATE?

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

TWENTY-FIVE...

SUCCESS SEEMS UNLIKELY. AGAINST AN INFINITE NUMBER OF WORLDS, EVEN IF WE--

NOT *WE*. I'LL BECOME UNRELIABLE--FRACTURED--LONG BEFORE THAT. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO THE HEAVY LIFTING YOURSELF.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE MAN--EVEN DOOM--TO DO SUCH A THING.

I KNOW...

YOU NEED TO START A *RELIGION*.

MISTER REECE...

YOUR AMBITION UNNERVES ME.

AMBITION IS THE ONLY THING THAT WE HAVE LEFT, VICTOR. IF YOU FAIL, EVERYTHING DIES...IF YOU SUCCEED, PERHAPS EVERYTHING WON'T...

EITHER WAY, IT ALL COMES DOWN TO YOU, SO YOU MUST PROTECT YOUR ANONYMITY--NO ONE MUST GUESS WHO THE GREAT DESTROYER REALLY IS...

AND HOW IT IS THAT HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO.

BECOME A MYTH. BECOME A ***LEGEND***.

BECOME A ***MURDERER***... A SERIAL KILLER WHO ONLY KILLS ONE PERSON.

I SEE VERY LITTLE GLORY IN THIS, AND NO ROOM FOR GRACE.

YOU'LL FIND IT. FINDING ME, HOWEVER, WILL HAVE COMPLICATIONS.

SOME WILL BE EASY, BUT ON MANY EARTHS, LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT--THAT WORLD'S HISTORY WILL BE UNKNOWN. BUT BEING POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE EARLY DEATH OF THE MULTIVERSE HAS ITS ADVANTAGES...

IF YOU CANNOT FIND ME ON A WORLD, FIND THE IDEA I HAVE MADE MANIFEST. THE ***MANIFOLD*** WILL SATISFY YOUR NEED.

SO I AM TO BE THE KNIFE...

YES.

PUT IT WHERE IT NEEDS TO GO.

AARRGHHHHH!

THE SKY WAS SO BLUE. THERE WAS A FLUFFY CLOUD IN THE HEAVENS THAT LOOKED LIKE--

=HURK!=

NO ONE CARES!

I HATE CLOUDS... CLOUDS... CLOUDS...

CLOUDS ARE MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF PARTICLES OF VAPOR.

IN FIVE YEARS YOU'VE ONLY KILLED A THOUSAND OF ME, DOOM. DOOM. DOOM.

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET TO ***BILLIONS?*** WHEN ARE THINGS GOING TO START SMASHING TOGETHER...

"TOGETHER..."

HHUAARGHHH!

"TOGETHER...

EARTH-129061.
THEN.

"THE FIRST INCURSION OCCURRED AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF MURDERING MOLECULE MEN.

"IN YEAR EIGHT, I FOUND MY FIRST DISCIPLE.

"A SWAN."

I SAW YOU.

I SAW WHAT YOU DID.

WHY'D YOU HURT THAT MAN?

BECAUSE *THAT MAN* WAS UNWILLINGLY GOING TO HURT US ALL.

AND BECAUSE I HAVE GOTTEN VERY GOOD AT PUNISHING HIM FOR IT.

WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE ALONE, CHILD?

WHERE IS YOUR FAMILY?

FAMILY ALL DIED IN A SENTINEL CAMP.

I JUMPED AWAY AS FAR AS I COULD.

SO YOU'RE SPECIAL.

I AM.

AND DO YOU WANT ME TO TEACH YOU HOW TO STOP ANYONE FROM HURTING YOU EVER AGAIN?

YES.

EVEN IF IT HAS A COST?

YES.

"ONE QUICKLY BECAME THREE, AS FAITH IN A THING MAKES IT A FORCE MULTIPLIER...

"AND ACTING ON WHAT YOU BELIEVE HAS A WAY OF SOLIDIFYING DOGMA.

"IT CHANGES THE WAY YOU THINK. IT CHANGES THE WAY YOU SPEAK.

"IN THE DOING, IT BECOMES MORE REAL...

"AND NOTHING IS MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN SINCERITY. SO MY SWANS GREW...

"THE MORE I DEMANDED, THE FURTHER THEY WENT.

"AND THE GREATER THEIR ACTIONS, THE MORE ATTENTION WE ATTRACTED.

"TEN YEARS IN, THE BEYONDERS REALIZED SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG, AND ATTEMPTED TO DEDUCE WHY THEIR GREAT EXPERIMENT WAS FAILING.

"IN THE SAME WAY THAT THEY INTRODUCED A SELF-DESTRUCT MECHANISM INTO THE FABRIC OF THE MULTIVERSE...

"THEY SPLICED A PROBLEM-SOLVING VIRUS INTO REAL SPACE...

"AND AS A RESULT, ANY SELF-AWARE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABLE OF TRANSUNIVERSAL TRAVEL WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY INFECTED.

"ITS VERY PROGRAMMING-- ITS ENTIRE MAKEUP-- CONSCRIPTED INTO THE BEYONDERS' CELESTIAL INQUIRY.

"THE MAPMAKERS AND THEIR SIDERA MARIS CHARTED WORLDS WHERE MOLECULE MEN HAD DIED.

"MARKING THE MOVEMENTS OF MY SWANS, SEEDING SACRIFICE WORLDS, AND PRESERVING FUTURE INCURSION WORLDS."

NOW.

AND SO, THAT IS THE GAME I HAVE BEEN PLAYING.

HUNTER. HUNTED.

AROUND AND AROUND UNTIL NOW.

VICTOR... THAT'S...

THAT'S... UNTHINKABLE.

SO, THE BLACK PRIESTS WERE ALSO SOME SORT OF PAWN IN THIS GAME, OR WHATEVER YOU MIGHT REFER TO IT AS?

NO. INTERESTINGLY, YOUR PRIESTS EMERGED AROUND THE SAME TIME AS THE MAPMAKERS.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO FATHOM THESE THINGS, BUT OVER THE YEARS I HAD COME TO BELIEVE THEY WERE SOME TYPE OF DEFENSIVE REACTION BY THE MULTIVERSE.

LOT OF FUSS FOR A DEAD END, BUT THEN AGAIN...

LOOK AT THE FUTILITY OF MAN. SOME PEOPLE SPEND THEIR WHOLE LIVES CHASING BUTTERFLIES.

AND THEY DON'T EVEN TASTE GOOD. SORRY THEY HAD TO GO. GO. GO.

WAIT.

BEFORE I LEFT EARTH, WITH REED AND THE OTHERS... WE HAD A BLACK SWAN WITH US.

WHICH WOULD MAKE HER ONE OF YOURS, BUT HER STORY WAS NOT YOUR STORY...

ALL APOSTATES BEGIN AS BELIEVERS, STEPHEN.

AND ALL SCHISMS COME FROM MISUNDERSTANDINGS...

"IT'S AN IDEA THAT YOU KNOW WELL...

"*YOU* HAVE ALWAYS HAD YOUR SANCTUM SANCTORUM. AND IN THE TEMPLE OF DOOM...

"...I HAD MY MOST HOLY OF HOLIES.

"THERE ARE SOME SECRETS THAT CAN BE TRUSTED TO NO ONE.

"WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES WISDOM, AND AS I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND FULLY WHAT WAS BEING ASKED OF ME, I DEMANDED GREATER FAITH.

"THERE ARE THINGS THEY WERE NOT PERMITTED TO SEE.

"THE *FACE* OF RABUM ALAL. THE *GLORY* OF THE COMING RESURRECTION.

"BUT SOME DARED TO QUESTION...SOME DARED TO KNOW...

"AND, IN KNOWING, TURNED FROM MY TEMPLE, AND SOUGHT A DIFFERENT PATH.

"UNKNOWN TO THEM, THE SAME PATH AS THE BEYONDERS-- THE EARLY DEATH OF EVERYTHING."

WHAT HAPPENED, VICTOR?

WHAT DID YOU DO THAT MADE THEM TURN FROM YOU?

THERE WAS NOTHING DONE...

IT WAS SOMETHING ***SEEN***. COME AND LOOK, STEPHEN...

WHAT IS...

OH!

STUDY AN ENEMY LONG ENOUGH, AND YOU LEARN HOW TO DEFEAT IT.

DO YOU SEE? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

BY THE SEVEN HELLS OF THE FORGOTTEN LANDS...

HELLO. HELLO. HELLO.

IT'S GENIUS. IT'S INSANE.

IT'S PERFECT.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, VICTOR?

WHAT WAS NECESSARY.

I WENT WHERE THE ROAD LED ME.

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AND OVERPOWER ME AT THE GENESIS OF OUR CONTRARY MACHINATIONS?

PUTTING ASIDE GENERAL THEORIES OF ATEMPORALITY AND THE OVERSIMPLIFICATION OF PARADOX, I REALIZED ONE THING...

HEY! IT'S GOT **MY** SEAL OF APPROVAL.

THUMBS. UP. UP. UP.

YOU SEE, AFTER QUITE SOME TIME, I BEGAN TO QUESTION THE OMNIPOTENCE OF MY ADVERSARY.

IF I WAS ABLE TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME WITH MISTER REECE TO CONSTRUCT A PLAN TO DEFEAT THEM--AND EVEN IF IT APPEARED THAT PLAN WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL--COULDN'T THEY SIMPLY DO THE SAME THING...?

THEY COULD NOT.

IT'S THEIR ONE WEAKNESS.

THEY ARE *LINEAR.*

THE ALL-POWERFUL BEYONDERS ARE CONSTRAINED--RESTRICTED--TO THEIR OWN SEQUENTIAL TIMELINE.

WHICH MEANT THAT IF I COULD ***TRULY*** FIND A WAY TO ***OPPOSE*** THEM, I WOULD HAVE A CHANCE...

"AND NOW?

"NOW I BELIEVE I HAVE FOUND A WAY."

"I HAVE TO ASK, VICTOR...

WHOSOEVER HOLDS THIS HAMMER, IF HE BE WORTHY, SHALL POSSESS THE POWER OF THOR

"WHAT'S THE POINT?

"HOW IN ANY WAY IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING ANY BETTER THAN THEM IF THE END RESULT IS THE SAME?"

ASK YOURSELF, DOCTOR...

WOULD IT BE WORTH IT IF WE COULD AVOID OUR CERTAIN DOOM?

IF WE COULD SAVE... *SOMETHING?*

...

YES.

We are Beyond.

Dreamers. Destroyers. All of reality our whim.

Who dares stand before us?

I. DOOM.

And what is this... Doom?

Some paltry man playing something more than what he is?

FOOLS. I AM DOOM THE DESTROYER...

I HAVE BROKEN WORLDS TO TAUNT YOU... I HAVE SHATTERED UNIVERSES TO MOCK YOU...

I HAVE TAKEN WHAT IS YOURS...

AND MADE IT MINE.

"FACE ME AT YOUR OWN PERIL, IF YOU DARE FACE ME AT ALL."

Doom.

For the short life left of everything, men and women will weep at the stories of what was done to you here this day...

AND I SAY, NO ONE WILL EVER HEAR THE WORD BEYONDER AGAIN...

FOR I WILL ERASE YOUR NAME FROM HISTORY.

"YOU DARED TO TEST US...

"YOU DARED TO TOY WITH US...

"I DARE TO THROW BACK IN YOUR FACE.

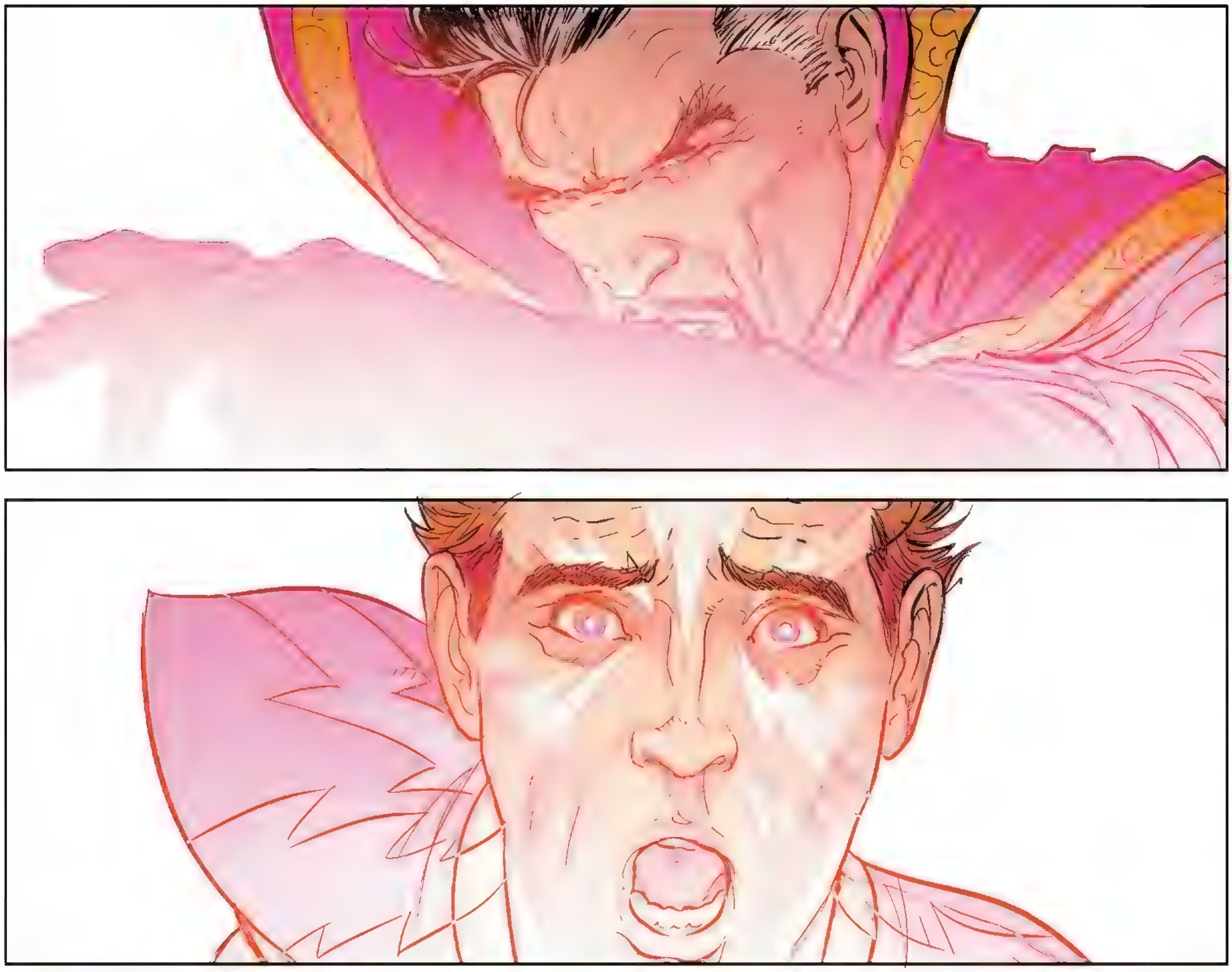
"DAMN YOUR CAUSE.

"DAMN THE COST.

"YOU WILL CERTAINLY DIE THIS...NO...

"NO..."

NO!



THE NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

MY GOD... DID YOU SEE THAT? IT JUST...

IT HAS TO BE A MISTAKE...

IT CAN'T BE...

DIAGNOSTICS SAY THE BRIDGE IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL. IT'S NOT A GHOST OR FLAWED READING...

THE DATA IS SOLID.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS CORRECT.

JUST LIKE THAT... WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATION...

THE NUMBER OF UNIVERSES WENT FROM HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS DOWN TO LESS THAN *TWO DOZEN.*

WE'RE OUT OF TIME. IT'S OVER...

ALL IS LOST.

"...AND ALL THAT'S LEFT IS ASHES"

NECROPOLIS.
TWO WEEKS AGO.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME DEBATE...

NO SMALL AMOUNT.

KFFF

THE CABAL IS GONE, AND WE'VE REACHED A...TENTATIVE TRUCE WITH ROGERS AND THE OTHERS.

IN FACT, THEY ARE COMING HERE NOW, AND TOGETHER WE WILL TEST THE LIMITS OF OUR NEWFOUND PEACE WITH TRUE STORIES OF THE END TIMES.

THE PROBLEM IS...FINDING YOU HERE WILL STOKE OLD FIRES.

BEST CASE SCENARIO IS WE TALK IT THROUGH. THE WORST IS FRESH AIR TO THE FLAMES, REIGNITING THE INFERNO.

THE POINT BEING, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOU, STARK.

WELL, I'D ENCOURAGE YOU TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, T'CHALLA. GET RADICAL, AND LET ME THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

THE PROBLEM WITH THAT IS I DON'T KNOW THAT WE CAN *TRUST* YOU ANYMORE, ANTHONY.

LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

WHAT I'VE DONE?

WHAT I'VE DONE.

I THINK YOU MEAN... WHAT *WE'VE* DONE.

OH...WE'RE ALL EQUALS HERE, BUT WE *ARE NOT* THE SAME. SOME OF US KEPT OUR EYE ON WHAT MATTERED...

SOME OF US KEPT TRYING TO FIND A WAY, WHILE OTHERS GOT LOST IN THE WOODS.

NAMOR MADE HIS BED WITH THE CABAL. GOD KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO *STEPHEN*. BUT YOU...

YOU HAD TO GO TO ROGERS, AND THE CALAMITY THAT FOLLOWED BROUGHT A STORM DOWN ON TOP OF US.

NOW LOOK AT YOU. JUST *LOOK* HOW FAR YOU'VE FALLEN.

YES...I AM FALLEN.

I AM A SINNER...AND A CRIMINAL WANTED FOR HIGH CRIMES.

BUT DON'T FORGET, JUST LIKE ALL OF YOU...

I HAVE...LOST... *EVERYTHING.*

I WILL NOT DIE IN A CAGE. UNDERSTAND... BROTHERS?

KRSH

KRSH

LET ME DIE FOR SOMETHING!

SMASHING

GO THEN, MY FRIEND...
DIE WELL.
AS THESE ARE THE DAYS FOR IT.

TWO HOURS AGO.

THIS IS A SMALL DISPLAY OF OUR TERRIBLE POWER...

ABOVE YOUR EARTH, A GREAT ARMADA OF GALACTIC EMPIRES HAS GATHERED TO DESTROY YOUR WORLD.

THIS...END IS UNAVOIDABLE.

A DARK SOLUTION TO A CELESTIAL PROBLEM THAT THREATENS EVERY LIVING THING IN OUR UNIVERSE.

BUT YOUR WORLD IS HOME TO HEROES...

GREAT MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SAVED NOT ONLY YOUR WORLD BUT OTHERS, MANY, MANY TIMES...

IN GRATITUDE, WE GIVE TWO OF YOUR HOURS TO FULLY EMBRACE THIS UNFORTUNATE REALITY AND PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR THIS UNTIMELY END.

YOU HAVE OUR THANKS, PEOPLE OF EARTH. YOU WILL BE MISSED.

SO SAYS *GLADIATOR*, MAJESTOR OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE.

YOUR TIME BEGINS NOW.

WELL, HE SOUNDS SERIOUS.

HE CERTAINLY DOES.

AND I SUPPOSE THIS WAS INEVITABLE.

BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT HE *THINKS* IS GOING TO HAPPEN AND WHAT ACTUALLY DOES.

ALERT S.H.I.E.L.D., AND I WANT PLANS OF ACTION IN THIRTY MINUTES.

CAN I CONFESS SOMETHING, RICHARDS?

OF COURSE.

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY TOTAL CHAOS-- I MEAN, AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING DISASTER OF *BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS*...

AND ALL I CAN THINK OF IS *HIM*.

TONY.

YES. I THINK ABOUT IT NOW, AND I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW I EVER TRUSTED HIM.

I CAN'T SPEAK TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP, STEVE. THAT WAS YOURS AND HIS. BUT I CAN TALK ABOUT *MOTIVE*, WHICH IS WHERE I THINK ALL HIS PARTICULAR DEMONS LIE.

DESPITE THE PAST YEAR'S DIFFERENCES, IN REGARDS TO YOU AND ME...WELL, OUR MOTIVATIONS ARE PRETTY CLEAR. I AM DEFINED BY MY FAMILY, THE PURPOSE OF EVERYTHING I DO CAN BE DISTILLED BACK DOWN TO THAT. AND YOU...

YOU ARE A GOOD MAN. YOU DO...GOOD THINGS.

TONY, HOWEVER, IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS US. HE'S A FUTURE MAN TRAPPED IN THE NOW. A PRISONER RAGING AGAINST THE SLOW CRAWL OF HUMAN EVOLUTION.

HIS RELATIONSHIPS, HIS MORALITY, HIS ETHICS...ALL OF THESE ARE HIGHLY ADAPTABLE. MALLEABLE TO WHAT HE WOULD CALL THE GREATER GOOD OF MANKIND'S NECESSARY SURVIVAL AND UNDENIABLE PROGRESS.

WHAT IS THIS?

IT'S TONY, IN A NUTSHELL.

IT'S FRACTIONAL, BUT I *AM* SMARTER THAN HE IS. HOWEVER, I HAVE A TENDENCY TO BE SINGLE-MINDED. ONE PROBLEM: ONE SOLUTION.

MISTER STARK, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS THIS WORLD'S GREATEST MULTITASKER. HE CAN FOCUS ON ONE PROBLEM-- SAY, THE END OF OUR UNIVERSE--

"AND AT THE SAME TIME BE WORKING ON ANOTHER."

WE'VE GOT ACCESS, STEVE. WE'RE GOOD TO GO.

JUPITER

OKAY.

LAUNCH IT.

"IT'S STAGGERING, REALLY. THAT ABILITY OF HIS...

"I REMEMBER WHEN HE TOLD ME HE'D FINISHED THIS. IT WAS THE SAME WEEK WE'D FINALIZED SOME MULTIVERSAL ENHANCEMENTS TO THE BRIDGE.

"NOT AN EASY THING TO DO.

"BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE'D BEEN WORKING ON THAT, HE'D CREATED, INSTALLED AND PERFECTED AN AUTOMATED CONTROL SYSTEM FOR THE *PLANETKILLER* WE'D CAPTURED BACK DURING THE BUILDER WAR.

"HE'S JUST NOT LIKE US, STEVE.

"HE'S NOT."

THEN.

I CAN'T DO IT. I CAN'T... THESE ARE MY PEOPLE.

EVERYONE I LOVE IS HERE.

I AM LOYAL TO YOU-- I AM LOYAL TO THE EMPIRE...

BUT THERE IS A LINE, AND THIS IS IT.

ANYTHING BUT THIS, MAJESTOR, *ANYTHING*. WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?

NOTHING YOU ARE NOT. THERE WAS A TIME I MADE THE SAME CHOICE YOU HAVE, AND ALL IT GAVE ME WAS A THRONE.

FIGHT WELL, SUPERGUARDIAN. YOU HAVE DONE YOUR WORLD PROUD... FAREWELL.

NOW.

OKAY. I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I MIGHT HAVE MADE MISTAKE.

THIS IS OUR *BEST* LAST HOPE, IZZY...

ONLY THE BIG FAT WALLET OF DA COSTA INTERNATIONAL CAN SAVE US NOW.

YEAH. I NEED SOMETHING *MORE*.

I HAVE AN IDEA. I MEAN, IF WE'RE TALKING WORST CASE SCENARIOS...

I'VE SURVIVED-- WE BECAME--IN THE DEAD SPACE OF EXTINCT UNIVERSES...AND WE'VE GOT ROOM TO GROW. MY HULL WILL EVENTUALLY EXPAND TO DOUBLE THIS SIZE.

IT'S NOT PERFECT, BUT IT'LL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW...

IF IT LOOKS BAD, DIAL UP THE AUGER AND RUN. I DON'T KNOW IF MY EXOSUIT CAN SURVIVE IN THAT ENVIRONMENT, BUT I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

OKAY. BE BRAVE, KIDDO.

MUBBA

WHAT'S THE WORD, GUYS? ARE WE READY TO GO?

YES, SIR, BUT IT'S GOING TO BE TRICKY. THE GRID IS LOW YIELD--REALLY, IT'LL JUST LOOK LIKE ALL THE OTHER SPACE JUNK ORBITING THE PLANET...

BUT WHEN WE POWER ON THE GEOTHERMAL DRIVE, WE'LL NEED TO BE ACTIVE RIGHT AWAY...

A POWER SIGNATURE THAT LARGE WILL DRAW ATTENTION. I GUESS WHAT I'M SAYING IS...

IF WE TURN THE WEAPON ON, WE HAVE TO USE IT *IMMEDIATELY.*

WELL, THAT DECISION'S BEEN MADE. WE JUST GOT THE SIGNAL FROM THE OTHERS.

ALL RIGHT.

DO IT.

"THE TWENTY ORBITING SATELLITES LAUNCHED BY DA COSTA TELECOM WERE SECRETLY PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL A.I.M. THERMAL NET.

"A SUPERWEAPON CAPABLE OF CHANNELLING THE POWER OF THE EARTH INTO A CONCENTRATED NiFe DISCHARGE."

FIRING NOW!

"MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DESTROY A SHI'AR FRIGATE OR AN ANNIHILATION MAMMOTH."

ZZZRRR

WHAT WAS THAT?

SIX SHIPS LOST, MAJESTOR-- IT CAME FROM THE PLANET.

DIRECTED THERMAL VENT. WE WERE UNAWARE THEY HAD THIS CAPABILITY...

WE SHAME OURSELVES, MENTOR.

HOW MANY TIMES WILL WE UNDERESTIMATE THE HUMANS?

STATUS REPORT?

MAJESTOR!

A MASSIVE SIGNATURE HAS JUST JUMPED IN-SYSTEM...

"IT'S RIGHT ON TOP OF THE ARMADA."

HA! IT'S WORKING.

WE'VE GOT THEM SANDWICHED BETWEEN US. WE'LL KEEP THEM OFF EARTH...

...WHILE *WE* PICK THEM OFF.

MAJESTOR! OUR POSITION IS DETERIORATING...

WE STILL HAVE A LARGE NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE, BUT THEY ARE HURTING US BADLY.

WE *WILL* EVENTUALLY PREVAIL, BUT I *CANNOT* PROJECT THAT WE WILL STILL HAVE ENOUGH COLLECTIVE FIREPOWER TO DESTROY THE PLANET.

FOCUS EVERYTHING ON THE PLANETKILLER. SEND EVERYTHING AT IT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SYSTEM THRESHOLDS ARE APPROACHING CRITICAL... IF WE DON'T SHUT DOWN THIS FACILITY, WE COULD LOSE EVERYTHING.

IF WE STOP NOW, WE *WILL* LOSE EVERYTHING. KEEP FIRING!

BA-BOOM

OKAY...OKAY. YEAH, WE SHOULD'VE STOPPED FIRING.

WE HAVE TO TELL THE OTHERS.

JUST AS I FEARED. WE LOST THE DYNAMO, SIR...

THE WEAPON SYSTEM IS OFFLINE.

EARTHSIDE IS DOWN, AND A HUGE CHUNK OF THE ARMADA IS MOVING TOWARDS OUR SHIP.

TOWARDS? WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT?

OPPORTUNITY, MAJESTOR.

THE PLANETARY WEAPON HAS GONE DARK AND OUR FORCES ARE IN POSITION.

VERY WELL, MENTOR...

SEND FORTH THE *ANNIHILATION WAVE.*

YESSSSSS YESSSSSSS

SSSSWEET DEATH BRINGSSSS RESSSSURRECTION

THOOM

THOOM

THOOM

THOOM

THOOM

IT'S OVER.
WE'RE DONE.
THE HUMAN FORCES HAVE BEEN SUBDUED, GLADIATOR.
THE WORLD IS YOURS.
THEY FOUGHT WELL, BUT THIS TIME THEY WERE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF FATE.
FORM UP THE FLEET...
DESTROY THE PLANET.

THE CONTROL DISC OF THE ROGUE PLANET.

EVERYTHING LOOKS GOOD.

THE PLANET'S STILL OUT OF PHASE--THE CONTROL DISC IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY.

MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME TO TALK ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS A GOOD IDEA.

WE'LL TALK AFTER--WE'RE ON THE CLOCK.

"PHASING IN THE ROGUE PLANET."

EVERYTHING'S GREEN. PLANET'S IN PLACE AROUND EARTH--BOTH FREQUENCIES SWITCHED.

AND NOW WHAT DO WE DO, REED?

WE WAIT FOR HIM.

THEN.

IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, REED... A HEAVY GRAVITY WELL IS JUST A UNIVERSAL ATTRACTOR.

OF COURSE WE'RE DRAWN TO IT. I'M DRAWN TO IT.

THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING WHILE YOU'VE BEEN HIDING?

YES. PLANNING. A GREATER MACHINE FROM OTHER MACHINES. YOU'LL NEED THE DISC TO CONTROL THE ROGUE PLANET.

AS IN THIS EXPANDING MIDNIGHT THAT NOW GOES ON VIRTUALLY FOREVER, THERE'S ONLY ONE GUIDING LIGHT LEFT...

FIRE TO CAST OUT THE DARKNESS.

YOU HEARD ABOUT THE ARMADA AND HEADED STRAIGHT FOR SOL'S HAMMER.

YES, REED.

I AM ICARUS.

"YOU *DO* KNOW THE POINT OF THAT STORY IS THAT HE FLEW TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN, RIGHT?"

"DO YOU KNOW WHO THINKS THAT WAY, REED?"

PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER FLOWN.

"ONE WAS LIFE. ONE WAS DEATH."

TEXAS.
MONTHS AGO.

BURGER SHACK
J's

STAY HERE UNLESS I CALL FOR YOU...

...OR UNLESS I CAN'T.

I THOUGHT YOU TOLD ME A LONG TIME AGO THAT YOU COULDN'T EAT BEFORE A BIG TO-DO...

NERVOUS STOMACH, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND IT'S LUNCHTIME, AND YOU'RE EATING FRENCH TOAST.

WELL, ONE, I'M NOT NERVOUS.

AND TWO, *THEY SAY* IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY.

YOU SHOULD ORDER SOMETHING.

J's BURGER SHACK

TONY...

WHY ARE WE HERE?

WE'RE GOING TO BREAK BREAD, STEVE.

THEN I'M GOING TO TALK, YOU'RE GOING TO LISTEN, I'M GOING TO CONVINCE YOU WHY I'M RIGHT, AND THEN...YOU'RE GOING TO FORGIVE ME FOR NOT DOING A BETTER JOB THE FIRST TIME.

SO, *PLEASE* ORDER SOMETHING.

WHAT CAN I GET YOU, SIR?

COOK MAKES A MEAN BURGER-- I'M KINDA PARTIAL TO THE SHRIMP AND GRITS, BUT HONESTLY, MOST EVERYTHING'S GOOD. DO YOURSELF A FAVOR, THOUGH, AND DON'T OVERDO IT--

YOU'LL WANNA SAVE ROOM FOR DESSERT. THE PIE'S TO DIE FOR.

REALLY. I'M FINE.

NONSENSE.

HE'LL HAVE A BURGER.

SO...CAN I JUST TALK FOR A BIT? WILL YOU PROMISE YOU'LL LISTEN?

THE ONLY THING I'LL PROMISE IS THAT WHEN WE'RE DONE HERE, YOU'RE COMING BACK WITH ME.

YOU DON'T REALIZE HOW ALL OF THIS HAS BEEN PERCEIVED.

THE PRESIDENT. OTHER WORLD LEADERS. THE ENTIRE U.N....THEY'RE READY TO ACT, AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE GOING TO DO.

THE ENTIRE U.N....

IT'S A WONDER I CAN SLEEP AT NIGHT.

I DON'T GET IT. YOU PLAN FOR EVERYTHING...

...SO WHY WON'T YOU CONSIDER WHAT IT MEANS IF YOU *FAIL*?

THIS IS THE PART YOU CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH YOUR HEAD, STEVE. I *HAVE* THOUGHT ABOUT IT...

IF WE FAIL, THEN *EVERYTHING DIES.* HOW CAN YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND THAT?

WHY ARE WE DIVIDED ON THIS WHEN NAMOR AND HIS BAND OF MONSTERS ARE OUT THERE DOING GOD KNOWS WHAT?

THOSE MONSTERS ARE DOING THE EXACT SAME THING YOU WERE DOING.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

HERE YOU GO... ENJOY.

SO THAT'S IT, STEVE, ISN'T IT?

THE VERY HEART OF IT...YOU REALLY DO THINK I'M A BAD GUY. THAT YOUR FRIEND IS GONE--LOST-- AND HAS BEEN REPLACED BY WHATEVER I AM NOW.

YOU SHOULD TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE KIND LADY WHO HAS BROUGHT YOU YOUR FOOD.

WHY WOULD...

HUH. I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE...

IS THAT YOU, TAMARA?

YES, I'M TAMARA. HAVE WE MET?

OF *COURSE* WE HAVE, WHY ELSE WOULD YOU KNOW MY NAME?

YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME. I HAD AN ACCIDENT AND MY MEMORY...

WELL, IT AIN'T ALL THERE. MY SWEET DAUGHTER IS HAVING TO REMIND ME OF ALL KINDS OF THINGS ALL THE TIME.

NO MIRACLE UNDER THE SUN QUITE AS SPECIAL AS SOMEONE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.

YOU FOUND HER DAUGHTER.

I DID. WASN'T THAT MONSTROUS?

...

NO, IT WASN'T. IT'S THE KIND OF THING THAT USED TO BLOW ME AWAY. BILLIONAIRE SWEATING THE SMALL STUFF.

THE IMPORTANT THINGS. ARE WE REALLY GOING TO FIND SOME WAY OUT OF THIS?

I KNOW WE CAN.

DON'T LIE.

DON'T DO THAT...

DON'T SEED HOPE WHERE THERE IS NONE.

YOU PROMISED US A GREAT MACHINE OF SALVATION, YET BUILT NO SUCH THING.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT LASTING THING YOU BUILT, ANTHONY STARK?

NOTHING.

A HOUSE BUILT ON LIES.

I AM DYING, STARK...

THE UNIVERSE IS DYING.

WE ALL ARE.

AND YOU HAVE KNOWN IT ALL ALONG.

THE ROGUE PLANET.
NOW.

THE LAST AVENGERS.

THE END OF DAYS.

PHASE INVERSION COMPLETE, TONY...

THE EARTH HAS MOVED INTO THE SPACE PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY THE ROGUE PLANET...AND IT HAS MOVED INTO EARTH PHASE.

WE'RE AS SHIELDED AS WE'RE GOING TO GET. ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE?

THEY WERE GOING TO DO THE SAME TO US.

THESE ARE ALL THE CHOICES WE HAVE LEFT-- *BAD ONES.*

I'M CYCLING ON SOL'S HAMMER. PUSHING IT AS FAR AS IT WILL GO...

MAJESTOR!

SOMETHING'S WRONG! WE'RE DETECTING AN ENERGY SPIKE FROM THE LOCAL STAR.

I TOLD MYSELF THAT I WOULD NEVER BUILD WEAPONS AGAIN.

SHARRA AND K'YTHRI SAVE US.

FOR THE LAST YEAR, THAT'S ALL I'VE DONE.

I HAD FORGOTTEN JUST HOW GOOD I WAS AT IT.

HOLD ON, REED. THE HAMMER IS CHARGED.

FIRING...

...NOW.

TALENT IS TALENT...

AND IF YOU HAVE A GIFT, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE IT.

IF I'M TELLING THE TRUTH, I'M NOT EVEN TRYING TO ANYMORE.

HE DESTROYED ALMOST THE ENTIRE FLEET...

IT WORKED.

YES, IT DID...

"IT'S SAFE TO PHASE THE EARTH BACK INTO NORMAL SPACE...

"IRON MAN SAVED US...

"JUST IN TIME, TOO...

"I MEAN, REALLY, WHO *DOESN'T* WANT TO STICK AROUND FOR THE APOCALYPSE?"

EARTH-1610.
THEN.

THE CITY.

A technological city pops up in the middle of nowhere, and we find it because the boy genius Reed Richards summons us...

I've got a bad feelin' about this, Nick.

See what he's wearin', Hawkeye? You better double it.

Gentlemen, if the total state of alarm wasn't clearly visible on your faces...

Your spiking body temps and increased breathing would absolutely give you away.

You're upset.

You sayin' we shouldn't be? That little talk we had about preparing for the things out there the world ain't ready for--

--did you know I was talkin' to you about *you*?

But you weren't, General Fury. And, in fact, you were more right that you knew.

What would you say if I told you for the last year I've been saving the world from an external threat that meant not just to kill our *planet*...

...but our entire universe?

Uh, thanks?

If you're tellin' the truth-- and I don't think you are--then, sure, appreciation would be in order...

...followed quickly by proof... followed just as fast by an explanation.

I called you here for just that purpose, General. Please...

...step inside.

City?

Yes, Maker?

How long do we have?

A little over one hour.

Perfect. Thank you.

General Fury. Hawkeye. I'd like to introduce you to Thanos and Maximus.

Foreboding, yes...*concerning*, probably...but the really interesting thing about these two is that they come from another universe.

Is that so?

IT IS. GOT HERE BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH, TOO.

Well, good to have you. Do either of you have any idea what's going on here?

OF COURSE WE DO, HUMAN.

AN INCURSION OF WORLDS IS NIGH.

Someone want to tell me what the purple guy is talking about?

It's the reason you're here.

But to fully answer that question, it's going to take some doing.

RUMBLERUMBLERUMBLERUMBLE

What the hell?

And a verbal explanation would, uh, leave a lot to be desired. You're going to need to see it with your own eyes. Eye. Whatever.

I'm just saying, for you to fully understand...

"...we're going to have to take a bit of a trip."

EARTH-616.
THE WHITE HOUSE. NOW.

YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN ONCE MORE? MAYBE A BIT SLOWER...

...BECAUSE I'M SURE I MISUNDERSTOOD YOU, PRINCE T'CHALLA.

I DON'T THINK YOU DID, BUT LET ME MAKE IT SIMPLER. SOME TIME LATER TODAY THE WORLD IS GOING TO END.

WE WILL BE ASSEMBLING A TEAM OF THE BEST SCIENTISTS IN THE WORLD IN THE HOPES OF SOMEHOW SURVIVING THAT END AND RESTARTING THE HUMAN RACE...

I'M TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WHEN THEIR TIME IS UP. PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WHEN THEIR TIME'S RUN OUT.

AND THEY NEED TO HEAR THIS FROM SOMEONE THEY CAN TRUST--

THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO. SOMEONE SOMEWHERE HAS TO BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING.

ISN'T THERE ANYONE WILLING TO HELP?

THERE WAS.

HE WAS A KING. BUT THEN YOU AND ALL THE REST OF YOUR KIND THREW HIS PEOPLE TO A PACK OF WOLVES CALLED THE CABAL.

AND NOW HIS CITY IS ASH.

WHICH IS ALL I NOW OFFER YOU.

HOW LONG?

WE BELIEVE THE FINAL INCURSION WILL OCCUR IN THE NEXT SIX HOURS.

MISTER PRESIDENT, WE CAN SCRAMBLE ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL. WE CAN STOP WHATEVER OPERATION THESE PEOPLE ARE--

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING, GENERAL...

IT'S OVER.

YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE IN THIS ROOM ARE GOING TO DIE. THERE'S NO AVOIDING IT. THERE'S NO ESCAPE. THIS IS SIMPLY THE HAND YOU'VE BEEN DEALT.

I'M NOT POSTURING. I'M DELIVERING INFORMATION.

WHAT YOU DO WITH IT IS UP TO YOU.

YOU PEOPLE WERE SUPPOSED TO *SAVE* US!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'VE LEARNED THROUGH ALL THIS?

THERE WAS *NEVER* ANY SAVING YOU.

WE WERE NEVER GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD-- WE NEVER STOOD A CHANCE.

EARTH-1610.
THEN.

Maker, the Helicarriers of S.H.I.E.L.D. have returned and joined us en route.

Can we expect any further trouble, General?

No. I've cleared the airspace, but just as a future consideration...

...it's not unnatural for a nation state to lose their cool when UFOs show up unannounced in sovereign airspace.

Ah. Proventialism...

A concept soon to be forgotten, if I had to guess.

City, how long do we have now?

No time at all, Maker.

You're going to want to pay attention, General Fury.

This is an incursion.

A collision of worlds that is the harbinger of the death of universes.

Am I crazy or is that *another Earth?*

What. The. Hell?

Launching WorldWorm, Maker...

Scans show no signs of incoming hostiles. It appears to be a soft Earth, sir.

What you're looking at, General, is a delivery mechanism for embedding a microscopic singularity into the core of the other world.

It's a slower method, but much cleaner than my earlier antimatter solutions. Honestly, I'm not sure what I was thinking using those.

Anyway, you'll notice that once the world dies, the incursion stops.

Are you, in some kind of roundabout way, telling me you just destroyed a planet?

I'm not being coy at all, General. That's **exactly** what I did.

That's what I've been trying to explain to you. There are forces at play that are actively trying to destroy our entire universe.

An incursion means that we **must** choose between the survival of our world or theirs.

There are no other choices, I've considered them from time to time... but that doesn't matter now. Tell him, Thanos.

WHAT WAS ONCE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF REALITIES HAS--AFTER TODAY--NOW BEEN REDUCED DOWN TO TWO FINAL UNIVERSES.

THIS ONE... AND THE ONE FROM WHICH WE CAME.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT HORRORS AWAIT US ON THAT WORLD?

THE GREATEST HEROES YOU HAVE EVER SEEN. THE VALIANT. THE COURAGEOUS.

IF YOU WANT YOUR WORLD TO LIVE...

WE MUST FIND A WAY TO *KILL THEM ALL.*

EARTH-1610.
NOW.

HOW GOES IT, MAXIMUS?

WILL IT BE READY IN TIME?

THE INFORMATION IS ALL HERE, THANOS, BUT WILL IT WORK?

MAYBE. MAYBE NOT. I THINK I'LL LET YOU STEW FOR A BIT.

CHK

GAMES ARE BORING, MAXIMUS. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE SO BAD AT THEM.

IF THERE'S ONE CONSTANT IN THE UNIVERSE, IT'S THAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO WHATEVER'S NECESSARY TO SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN.

WHAT ABOUT THE GENERAL? IS HE GOING TO PLAY HIS PART?

HE WAS ONLY GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A SINGLE ROLE, NAMOR...HE'LL BEHAVE PREDICTABLY. HE HAS TO.

I'M NOT SO SURE. HE SEEMS CRAFTY. AND HE'S LOOKED BOTH OF US IN THE EYES...HE KNOWS WE'RE LYING.

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

LOOK IN THE MIRROR, THANOS. YOU'RE AN EXTREMELY SKETCHY-LOOKING PERSON...

STILL, WHEN THE SKY OPENS UP AND HE SEES OUR EARTH SITTING THERE...

FOR THEM... IT'S THE FRYING PAN OR THE FIRE. AND WE GET TO WATCH IT ALL BURN.

THE TRISKELION.

Thank you for being here.

An hour ago I gave you all the chance to go home, as this is a volunteer-only mission.

In a very short time, the sky is gonna open up and we're gonna have to have to face an entire world full of enemies.

There is no good news. The bad is that it's another Earth.

There's nothing we can do about the witnesses inside the theatre of battle, but S.H.I.E.L.D. has made a conscious choice--*I* have made a conscious choice--to not tell the people of our world.

Let them live out their final hours in peace and not panic.

We owe them that.

The City's here, Nick.

Most of us won't live through the day, but if we don't make that sacrifice, then no one on our world will.

For me, it's not really a choice at all.

"I'll die on my feet, thank you very much.

"On my feet with a gun in my hand.

"I know you feel the same.

"So here we go..."

EARTH-616.
THE BAXTER BUILDING. NOW.

SO THE PLAN...IF YOU CAN ACTUALLY CALL MITIGATING DEFEAT A PLAN...

...IS TO SAVE WHAT WE CAN.

WE HAVE A VESSEL THEORETICALLY CAPABLE OF SURVIVING THE COLLAPSE.

WE'RE FINALIZING THE MANIFEST NOW, BUT I THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET ALL THE RIGHT SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WE NEED TO RESTART HUMANITY.

I WISH THERE WAS MORE, BUT...

AT LEAST IT'S SOMETHING...

BUT I WANT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT ONE THING: THIS ISN'T AN ESCAPE PLAN FOR YOU PEOPLE.

I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, STEVE. BUT THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND THE FACT THAT SOME OF THE ILLUMINATI ARE GOING...

BANNER KNOWS HE'S A RISK, SO HE'S TAKEN HIMSELF OUT. BRADDOCK'S BOWED OUT AS WELL, AND PYM'S UNSTABLE...

BUT THE REST HAVE VALUE.

THAT MAKES SENSE, SUE. THE SMARTS ARE ONE THING...

BUT THERE SHOULD BE SOME PROTECTION ON BOARD AS WELL. THE ILLUMINATI FIT THAT BILL, BUT YOU KNOW THE PROBLEM HERE, RIGHT?

TONY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THAT...

MISTER STARK HAS DONE MORE THAN--

THERE'S NO ONE--ABSOLUTELY NO ONE--WHO CAN DO THE THINGS HE DOES. IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT BUILDING, WELL, THEN WE SHOULD BE TAKING OUR BEST BUILDER.

WE SHOULD CONSIDER IT.

NO ONE HERE LOVES THE GUY LIKE I DO, REED, BUT I THINK THE QUESTION YOU HAVE TO ASK IS: IS HE REALLY THE GUY WE ONCE KNEW...

...OR THE PERSON WE KNOW NOW? I DON'T THINK YOU CAN GAMBLE WITH PUTTING THE SECOND ONE ON THE BOAT.

I'M SORRY, DEAR.

BUT I HAVE TO AGREE WITH RHODEY--IT'S A BAD IDEA.

IT'S NOT JUST A BAD IDEA--IT'S ***NOT GOING TO HAPPEN*** EVEN IF IT WAS A GOOD ONE.

PICK ANOTHER BATTLE, REED.

DO WE UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER?

YES.

THEN THAT'S IT. YOU HAVE YOUR ONE THING TO DO, AND I HAVE MINE.

YOU SURE THIS IS HOW SOMEONE SHOULD SPEND THEIR LAST FEW HOURS ALIVE, STEVE?

LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT, RHODEY. NOW TELL ME...

...CAN YOU FIND HIM?

PROXIMITY ALERT, MISTER STARK.

MULTIPLE WAR MACHINE DRONES DETECTED.

AND BAD NEWS, SIR. THEY'RE HARD-SHIELDED AGAINST PRIMARY OVERRIDES AND THEY HAVE FRIENDLY ACCESS CODES.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER THING?

FINAL INCURSION WILL BEGIN IN FOUR MINUTES, SIR.

THE RESURRECTION BUILDING.
STARK UNDERGROUND.

SUPER.

A SINGLE WAR MACHINE HAS ENTERED THE BUILDING, MISTER STARK. HEADED THIS WAY.

SO...

...YOU TOO, RHODEY?

IT ISN'T LIKE WE GO WAY BACK OR ANYTHING. IT ISN'T LIKE YOU DON'T OWE ME.

I'M NOT RHODEY...

BUT I *DO* OWE YOU...

TIME TO SETTLE UP, TONY.

EVERYONE'S TELLING ME IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD...

WELL... THERE'S ONE LAST THING I'M GONNA DO BEFORE THAT HAPPENS.

YOU? IN ARMOR I DESIGNED?

IT'S NEVER GONNA HAPPEN, STEVE...

YOU NEED TO WAKE UP.

NHHMMM?

WHAT'D YOU SAY?

WAKE UP, OLD MAN.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP.

I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT SOMETHING YOU SAID, AND, WELL...*I'VE BEEN BUSY.*

I'M SORRY. I KNOW IT'S LATE.

IT'S FINE, TONY.

I'M GRATEFUL.

BAD DREAMS?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, HAVEN'T YOU FIGURED IT OUT YET?

THE MACHINE IS JUST A TOOL. IT'S THE QUALITY OF THE MAN INSIDE THAT MATTERS.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TIRED I AM OF YOU REMINDING ME HOW MUCH BETTER THAN ALL OF US YOU ARE?

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM?

SO...THIS IDEA HAS BEEN RUNNING THROUGH MY MIND. IT'S OVERWHELMING --*ALL CONSUMING*-- AND I CAN'T SHUT IT OFF.

THE EXACT SAME THING HAPPENED THE DAY WE FOUND YOU.

YOU REMEMBER THAT?

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

OH...I REMEMBER *EVERYTHING* ABOUT THAT DAY.

WE STARTED SOMETHING THAT *MATTERED*. BECAUSE OF YOU, THE WORLD CHANGED...

I *CHANGED*.

EVERYTHING'S CHANGED!

OOOOOFF!

AND YOU MAY KNOW--BUT I DON'T!

I DON'T KNOW YOU ANYMORE AT ALL...AND I DON'T WANT TO...

YOU AND I...WE ARE FINISHED!

THAT'S THE BEST IDEA I'VE HEARD ALL DAY.

AARGHHHHH!

SEE, THE ***BEST*** IDEAS ARE ALWAYS THE ***SIMPLEST.*** AND LAST WEEK WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW THINGS KEEP ***ESCALATING...***

HOW THE WORLD IS EVER MORE DANGEROUS, HOW THREATS ARE MORE FREQUENT...HOW OUR ENEMIES ARE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS...

WELL, STEVE, THAT'S A COMPLEX PROBLEM, BUT YOU HAD A PRETTY SIMPLE ANSWER...

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID?

I DO.

"WE HAVE TO GET ***BIGGER.***"

THE WHOLE IDEA... THE ***AVENGERS MACHINE***...YOU HAD US ALL RUNNING IN A CIRCLE, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ***KNEW...***

YOU KNEW IT WAS A LIE.

YOU KNEW THERE WAS NO STOPPING THIS.

I KNEW THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE WE COULDN'T. IT WAS JUST TOO BIG. BUT WE DID NEED THE TIME TO TRY.

YOU WOULD THINK ONE OF THE OTHERS WOULD HAVE SEEN IT, BUT THEY WERE EITHER DISTRACTED WITH OTHER THINGS, OR IN REED'S CASE, WELL...

THE MAN RUNS ON HOPE. HE LIVES EVERY DAY IN DENIAL.

I WANT TO HEAR YOU SAY IT.

I WANT TO HEAR YOU SAY YOU *LIED.*

DO YOU EVEN REMEMBER HOW ALL THIS STARTED?

I WANT TO HEAR IT, TONY!

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME, OLD FRIEND?

AARRGH!!!!

ARE YOU LISTENING?

I WANT TO HEAR YOU SAY IT!

WAIT... WAIT...

YOU... YOU'RE RIGHT.

I KNOW. I KNOW.

DO...DO YOU KNOW WHAT...

...I WOULD HAVE DONE...DONE DIFFERENTLY NOW, STEVE...?

I... I LIED...

I... KNEW...

YOU KNEW THE WHOLE TIME!

YOU KNEW AND YOU TOLD NO ONE!

NOTHING!

IT STARTED WITH *TWO MEN.*

ONE WAS LIFE...

...AND *ONE* WAS *DEATH.*

AND *ONE*... ALWAYS *WINS.*

EVERYTHING DIES.

THERE IS ONLY
SECRET WARS

AVENGERS #24

AVENGERS #24 VARIANT
BY AGUSTIN ALESSIO

AVENGERS #24 ANIMAL VARIANT
BY DAVID PETERSEN

AVENGERS #24 VARIANT

BY SIMONE BIANCHI & ADRIANO DELL'ALPI

AVENGERS #24 DEADPOOL VARIANT

BY CARLO BARBERI & EDGAR DELGADO

C'MON!

TWERK IT WITH ME!

BARBERI.13

AVENGERS #25

AVENGERS #25 VARIANT
BY ALEX ROSS

AVENGERS #26

AVENGERS #27

AVENGERS #28

AVENGERS #25-27 COMBINED VARIANTS BY
DUSTIN WEAVER & JUSTIN PONSOR

AVENGERS #28 CAPTAIN AMERICA TEAM-UP VARIANT
BY AGUSTIN ALESSIO

AVENGERS #29

CHO +Keith

AVENGERS #30

AVENGERS #30 VARIANT BY
LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO

AVENGERS #31

AVENGERS #32

AVENGERS #33

AVENGERS #34

NEW AVENGERS #13

NEW AVENGERS #13 VARIANT BY **MIKE DEODATO JR. & RAIN BEREDO**

NEW AVENGERS #14

NEW AVENGERS #15

NEW AVENGERS #16

NEW AVENGERS #16 VARIANT BY **RAGS MORALES & PAUL MOUNTS**

NEW AVENGERS #17

NEW AVENGERS #17
CAPTAIN AMERICA TEAM-UP VARIANT
BY **PAOLO RIVERA**

NEW AVENGERS #17 VARIANT
BY **PHIL JIMENEZ & RACHELLE ROSENBERG**

NEW AVENGERS #18 VARIANT BY **CHRISTIAN WARD**

NEW AVENGERS #18

NEW AVENGERS #19

DUSTIN WEAVER + Keith

NEW AVENGERS #20

DUSTIN WEAVER
+ Keith

NEW AVENGERS #21

DUSTIN WEAVER

NEW AVENGERS #22

NEW AVENGERS #23

CJW

AVENGERS #35

NEW AVENGERS #24

AVENGERS #35 & NEW AVENGERS #24 COMBINED VARIANTS BY AGUSTIN ALESSIO

AVENGERS #36

NEW AVENGERS #25

AVENGERS #37

NEW AVENGERS #26

AVENGERS #38

NEW AVENGERS #27

AVENGERS #39

NEW AVENGERS #28

AVENGERS #40

NEW AVENGERS #29

AVENGERS #40 WELCOME HOME VARIANT
BY SALVADOR LARROCA & ISRAEL SILVA

NEW AVENGERS #29 WELCOME HOME VARIANT
BY SALVADOR LARROCA & ISRAEL SILVA

AVENGERS #41

AVENGERS #41 VARIANT
BY PHIL NOTO

the Avengers

NEW AVENGERS #30

new avengers

NEW AVENGERS #30 VARIANT
BY PHIL NOTO

AVENGERS #42

KUBLISH
2014

AVENGERS #42 WOMEN OF MARVEL VARIANT
BY ELENA CASAGRANDE & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

NEW AVENGERS #31

Lee, InHyuk

NEW AVENGERS #32

NEW AVENGERS #33

AVENGERS #43

DUSTIN WEAVER
J-Po

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WANDA MUST DIE!

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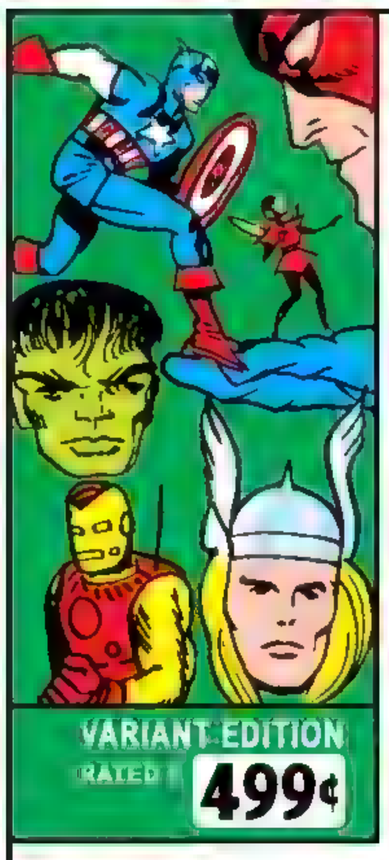
DANIEL ACUÑA



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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS

AW, #$%& --IT CAN'T BE!

OF ALL PEOPLE WE WOULD *NEVER* HAVE SUSPECTED **YOU!**

BARBERI '13 AFTER BUSCEMA

X-MEN X-SEMBLE-- TO LEARN THE STARTLING SECRET OF XORN!

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THE AVENGERS

ALL-NEW MARVEL NOW!

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YOU HAVE DISGRACED THE NAME OF THE X-MEN!

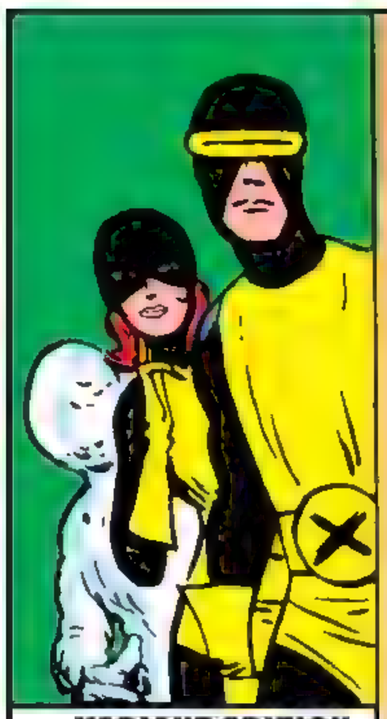
GO THEN, AND BE X-MEN NO MORE..

-- FOR, ALL-NEW ALL-DIFFERENT THINGS MUST END!

ARTHUR ADAMS 10-29-2013 AFTER NEAL ADAMS 1971

AVENGERS #24 VARIANT:
ARTHUR ADAMS & PETE PANTAZIS

AVENGERS #24 VARIANT:
KRIS ANKA



THE AVENGERS

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PROFESSOR XAVIER WALKS AGAIN!

ALSO IN THIS SENSATIONAL ISSUE SPIDER-MAN!!!

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THE AVENGERS

THIS ISSUE:
EVERYBODY DIES!

AVENGERS #24 VARIANT:
LEE GARBETT & EDGAR DELGADO

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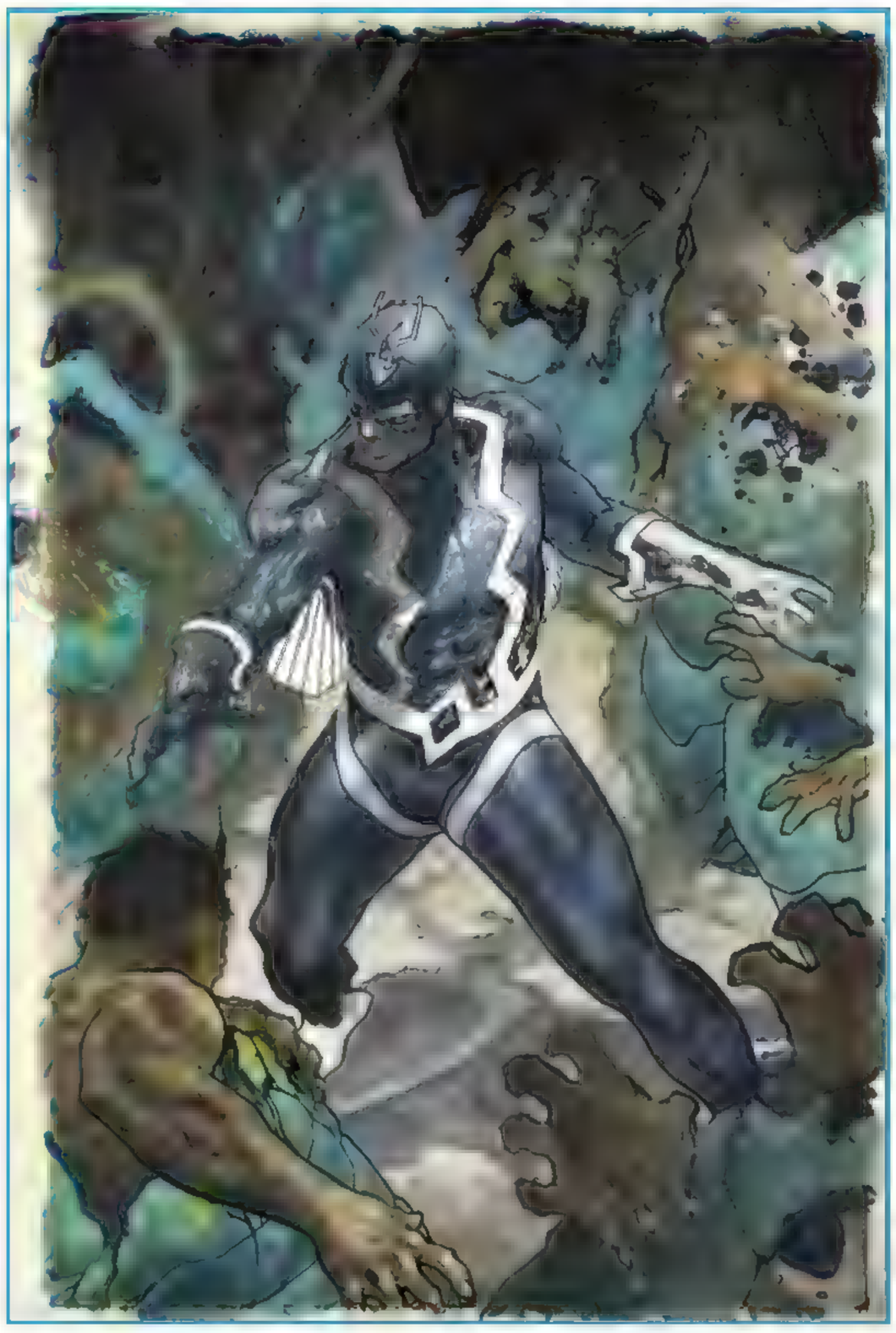

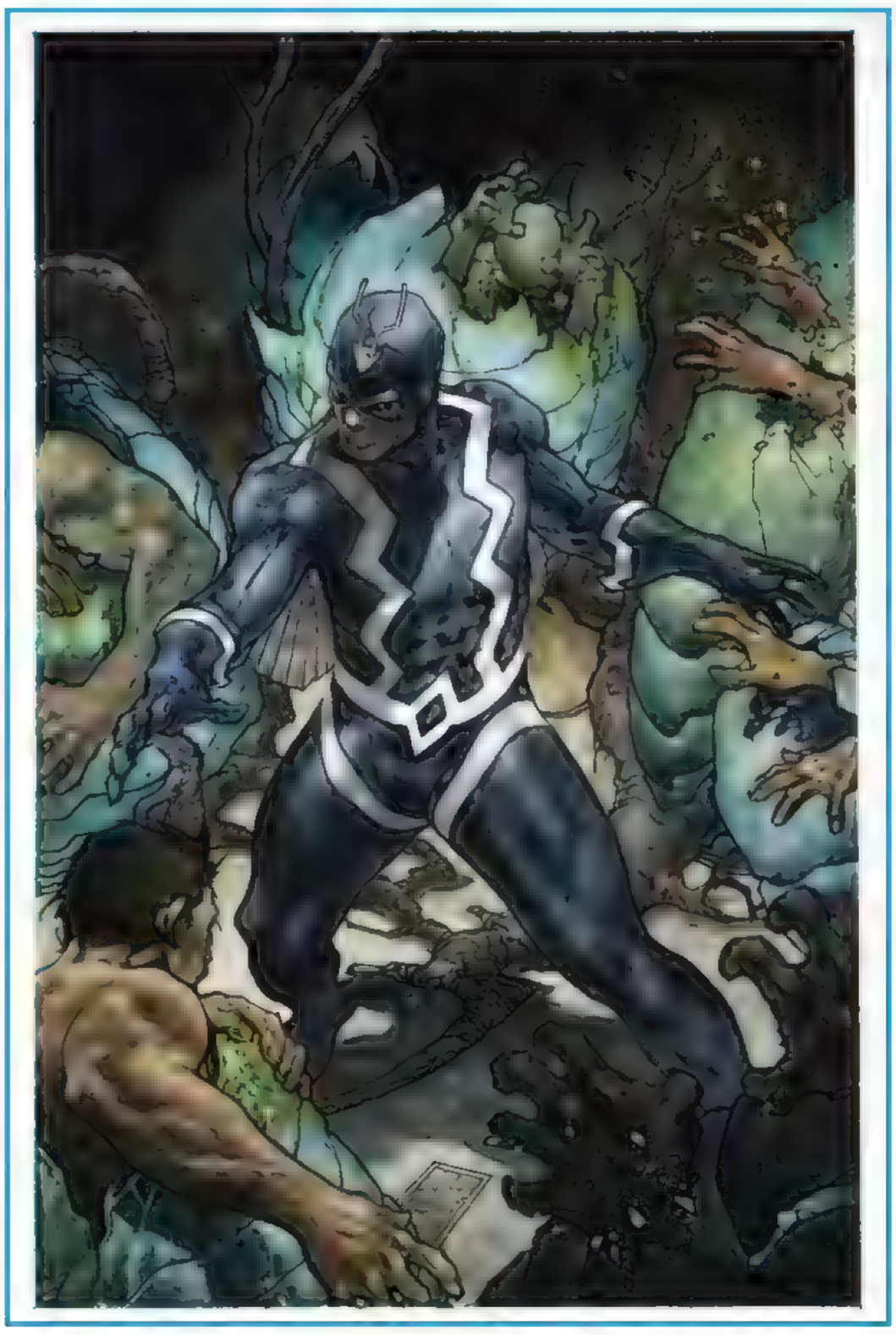

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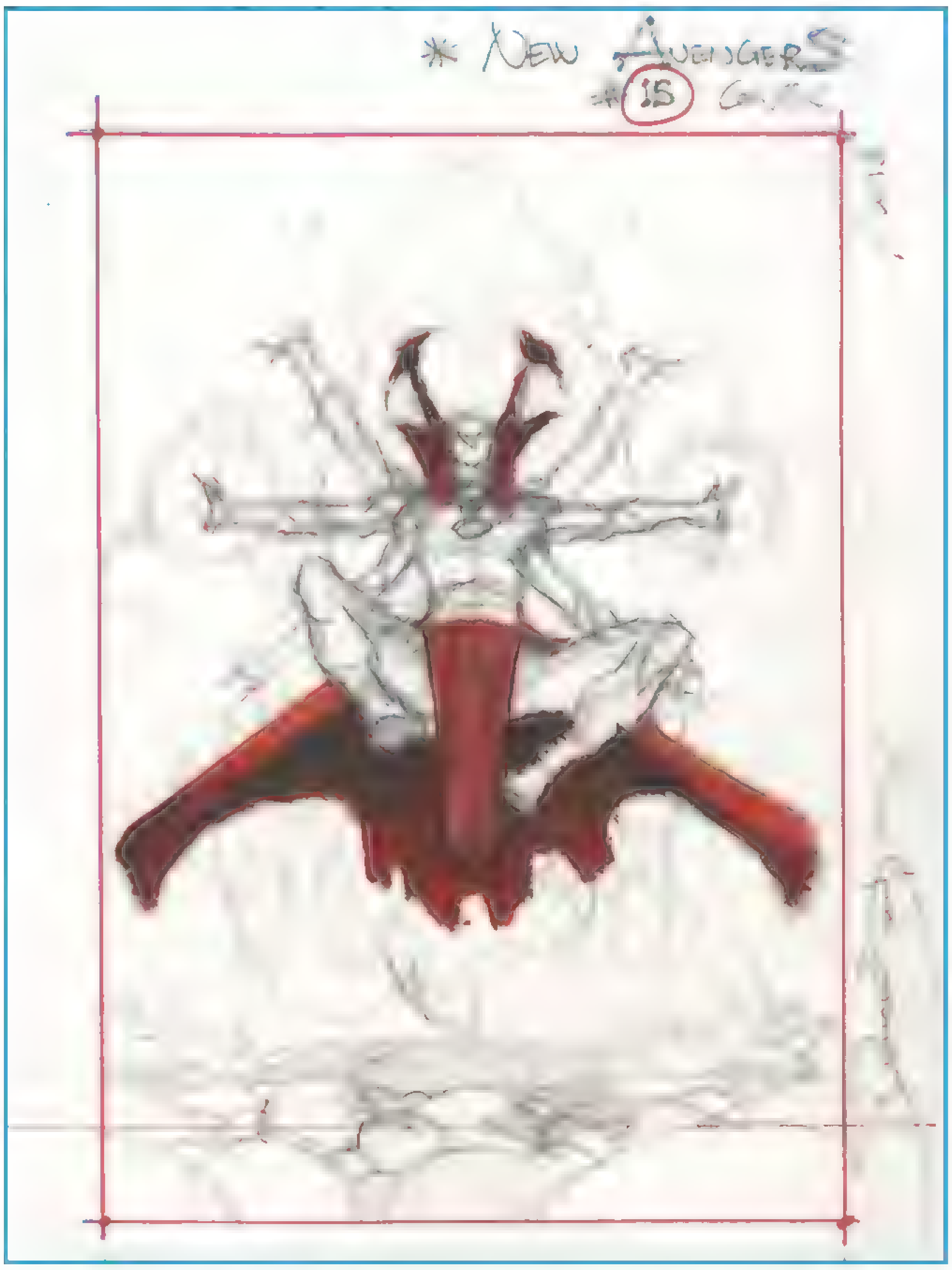

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LAYOUT

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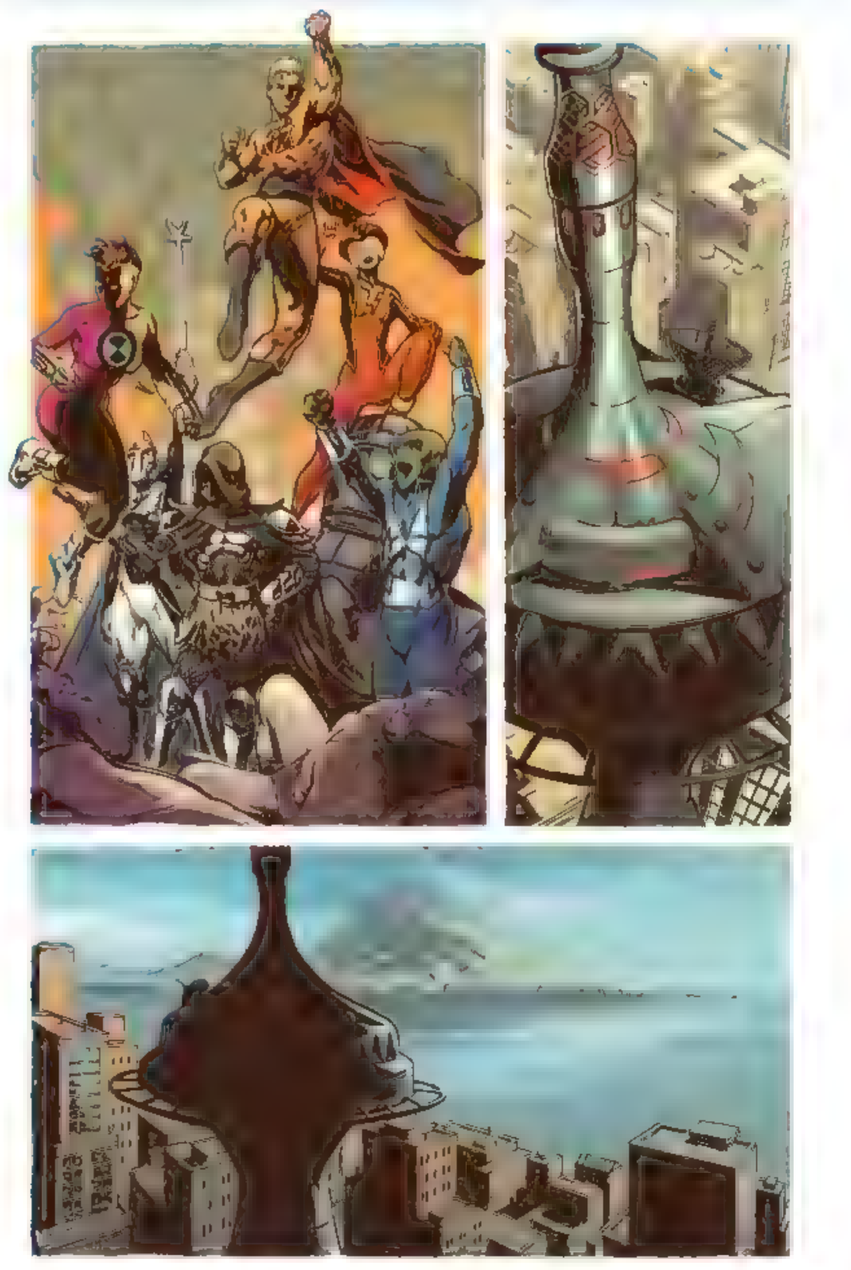

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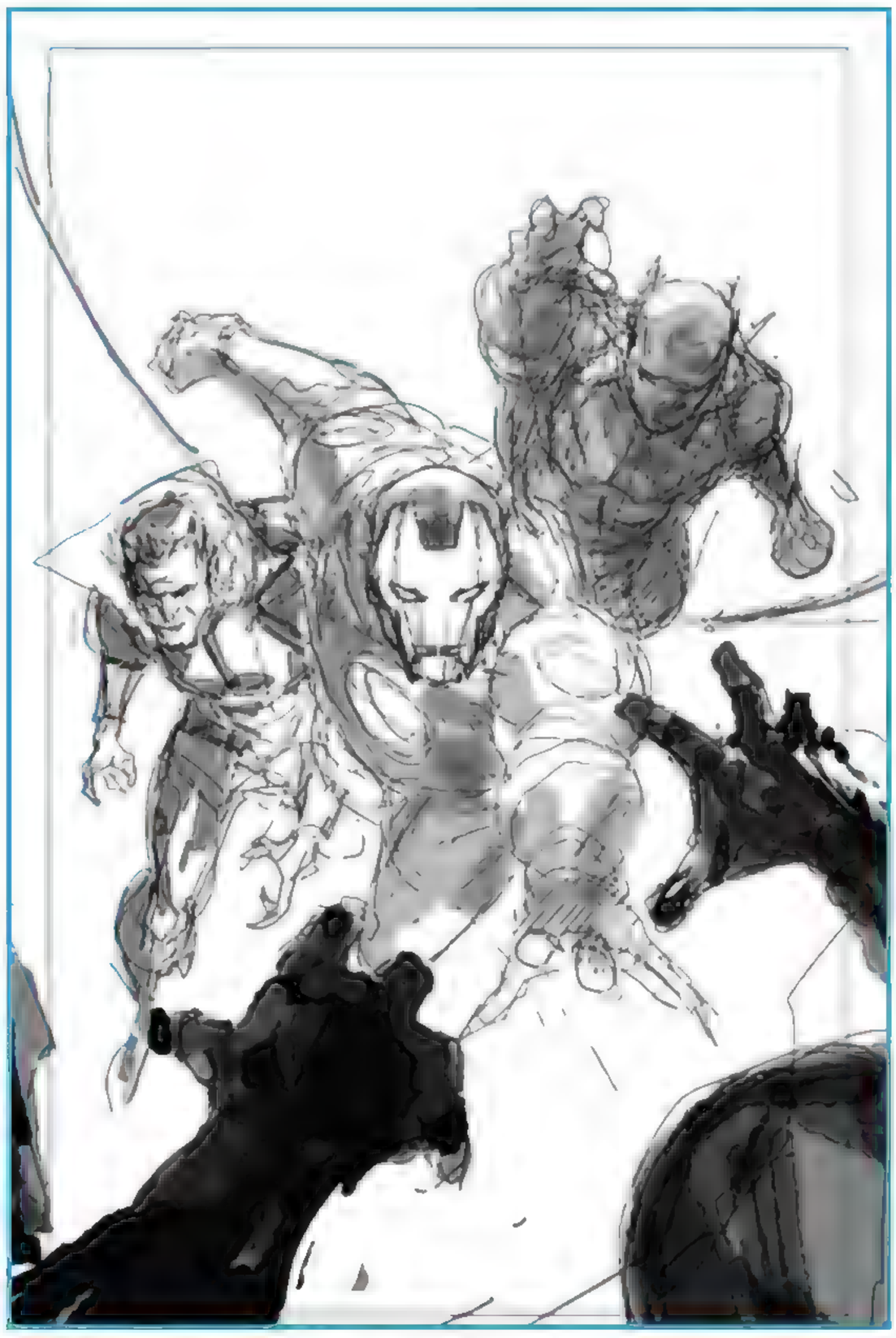

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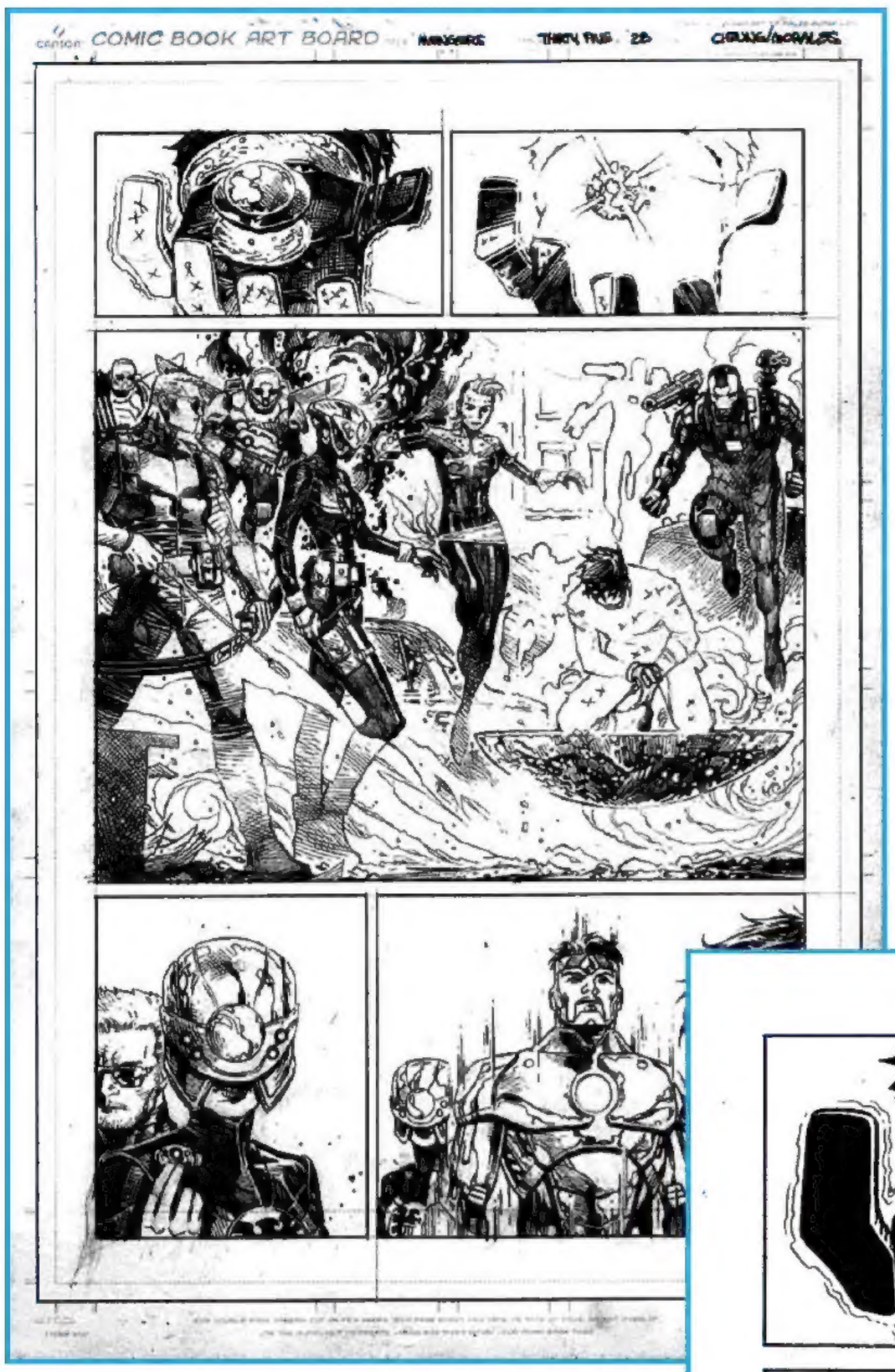

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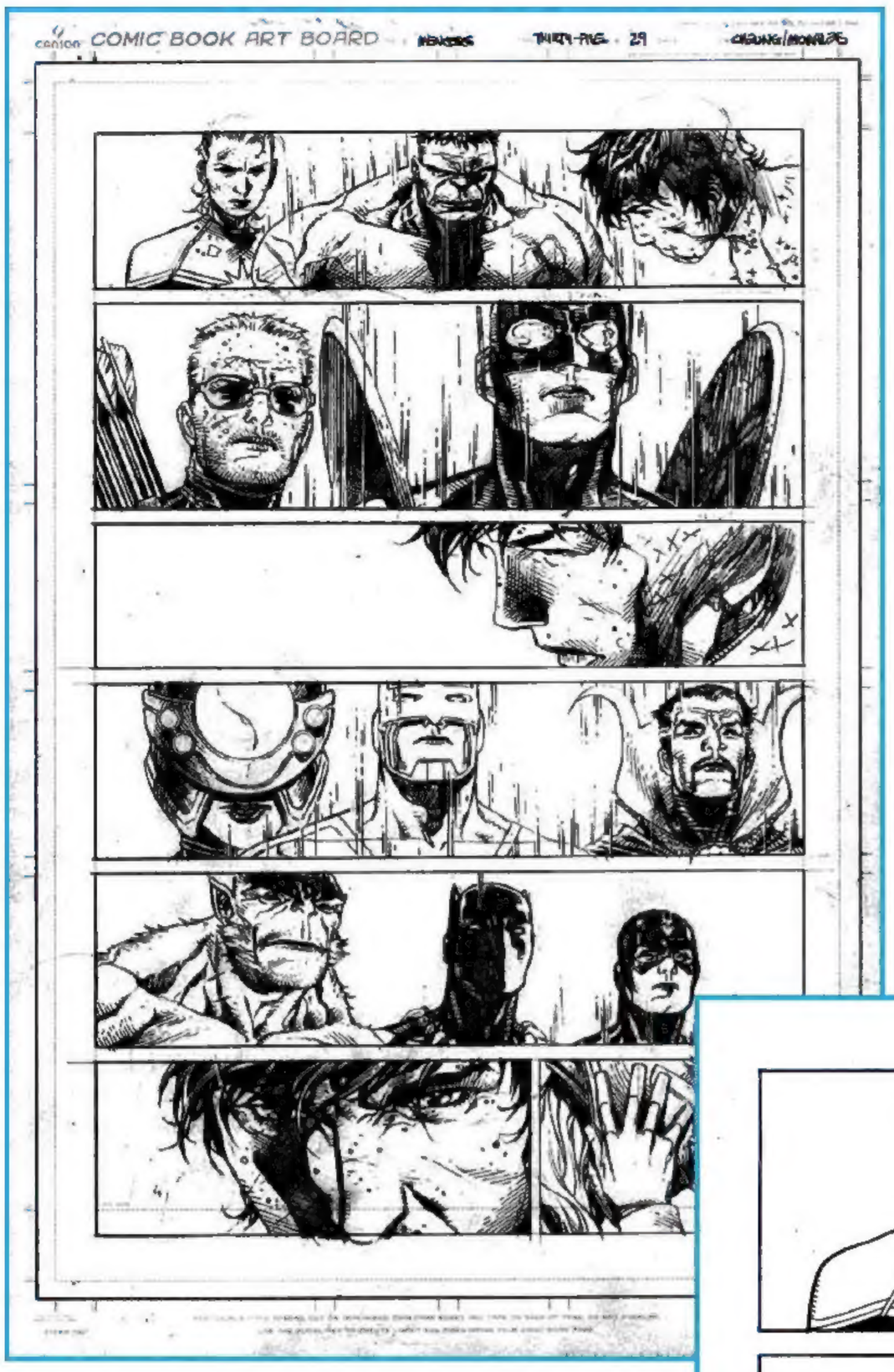
AVENGERS #35, PAGE 29 PROCESS BY **JIM CHEUNG & MARK MORALES**



PENCILS

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EVERYTHING DIES.

Jonathan Hickman brings his Avengers run to a cataclysmic conclusion with one of the biggest comic-book stories ever told, sprawling across the Marvel Multiverse and reaching far into the future! As threats mount — including A.I.M., a twisted version of the Avengers and the dark Cabal — the incursion crisis puts Captain America's team on a collision course with the shadowy Illuminati. One by one, realities are being destroyed — and time is running out.

"One of the most epic stories in Marvel's history."
– Comic Vine

Collecting *Avengers (2012) #24-44* and *New Avengers (2013) #13-33* — by Jonathan Hickman, Mike Deodato Jr., Butch Guice, Salvador Larroca, Esad Ribic, Leinil Francis Yu, Nick Bradshaw, Jim Cheung, Paco Medina, Dustin Weaver, Stefano Caselli, Mike Mayhew, Kev Walker, Simone Bianchi, Rags Morales, Valerio Schiti, Szymon Kudranski, Mike Perkins, Dalibor Talajić, Gerry Alanguilan, Mark Morales, Guillermo Ortego, Juan Vlasco, Scott Hanna, Rick Magyar, Frank Martin, Laura Martin, Paul Mounts, Dean White, Andres Mossa, Sunny Gho, Matt Milla, David Curiel, Adriano Dell'Alpi and Dono Sánchez-Almara.

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MARVEL

Avengers by Jonathan Hickman Omnibus None https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0BLT4VNXX Collects Avengers (2012) #24-44 and New Avengers (2013) #13-33. Jonathan Hickman's epic Avengers run builds to the end of all things! A runaway planet is on a collision course with Earth. A.I.M. brings a corrupt version of the Avengers into the Marvel Universe. And the collision of the Avengers and the Illuminati is imminent! But as teammate faces teammate, the Time Gem takes the Avengers on a peril-filled journey into days to come - ultimately sending Captain America fifty thousand years into the future to witness a true Avengers world! Meanwhile, as the Incursion crisis worsens, the Illuminati struggle with the weight of the burden they have shouldered. Their desperate, world-shattering actions will leave the Avengers at each other's throats - and give rise to the Cabal! And as the realities of the Multiverse collide, time runs out for everyone! Scraped metadata from Amazon [ASINB0BLT4VNXX]. [RELDATE:2023-05-10] Marvel 1059 EN 2023 7